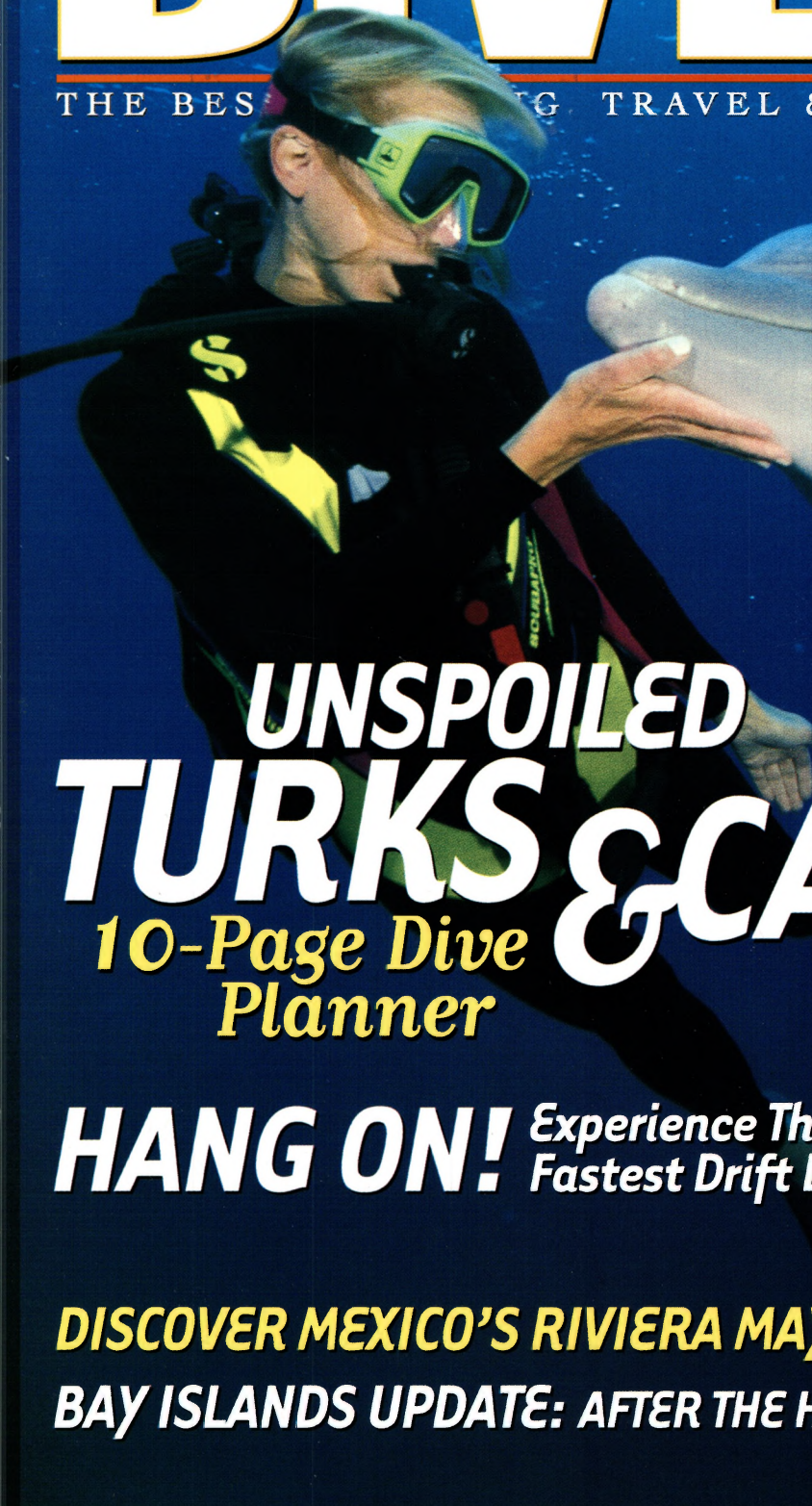
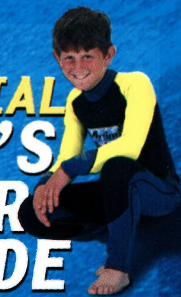




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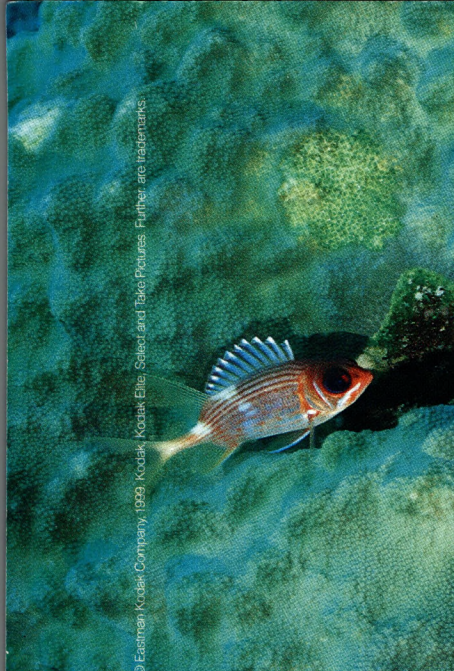
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AUGUST 1999
VOLUME 7 NO. 4
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PAUL SUTHERLAND | *INSIDE A TUNA SCHOOL*

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YVETTE CARDOZO | *VANCOUVER COLD AND FAST*

What's it like to dive in the world's fastest tidal current? Our writer couldn't resist the urge to find out — firsthand.

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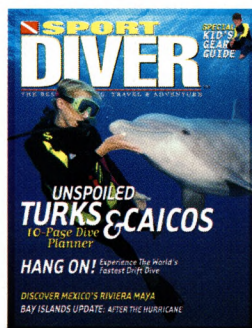
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Walt Stearns captured this fleeting moment of human/dolphin interaction at Freeport's UNEXSO.

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Back in the Water

It has been a busy month at *Sport Diver*. Editor Gary Joyce said goodbye and is now back in New York at work on a novel. I've jumped back into the day-to-day editor-

ial process, and Managing Editor Christine Dummit has assumed a host of new responsibilities.

As you flip through this issue, you'll see several sig-

nificant tweaks to the product, including new graphic design and an increased emphasis on news items and short "info bytes." You may also notice the references to www.sportdivermag.com that adorn every page. At press time, our programming staff was putting the finishing touches on our new Web site. Much more than just an electronic regurgitation of the magazine, the Sport Diver site was designed as the ultimate on-line resource for divers.

As always, *Sport Diver's* mission is to be the world's best dive magazine, not the biggest. Now, with the added resource of the World Wide Web, we can provide you with more entertainment, information and education than ever. — Pierce Hoover

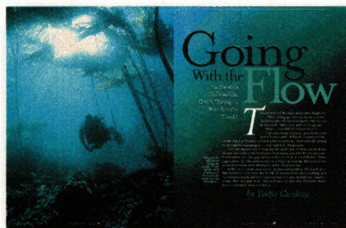
Contributors

YVETTE CARDOZO GOING WITH THE FLOW PG. 64

Avid cold-water diver and Seattle area resident Yvette Cardozo is right at home in the chilly waters of Puget Sound, but she actually learned to dive in Florida back in the "prehistoric" early '60s. Yvette has had a variety of diving experiences: She was one of the first divers to experience Stingray City in Grand Cayman and has snorkeled with beluga whales in Churchill, Manitoba. She says Nakwakto in British Columbia (*Going With the Flow*, p. 64)



was one of her "gnarliest" dives, but she is now heading for another frigid adventure in the Arctic waters of Baffin Bay that could make Nakwakto look tame by comparison.



PAUL SUTHERLAND SILVER STREAM PG. 58



Paul Sutherland is a Princeton, N.J.-based free-lance photographer, specializing in marine and marine natural-history subjects. His work regularly takes him down under to Australia. For this issue, he traveled offshore

with that country's tuna fleet to photograph the commercial divers who make a living working with the most valuable fish in the world in some of the most shark-infested waters on the globe. Spending a month with the tuna fishermen changed Sutherland's perspective on the complexities of the global resource utilization issue. Many Pacific Rim nations harvest the southern bluefin tuna. Only Australia and New Zealand do so under a self-imposed quota system designed to maintain the long-term viability of the fishery.



JOHN KINSELLA SKILLS PG. 24



John Kinsella started diving in the canals of Ireland in the mid-1970s. He has been a retail scuba equipment salesman and an HSE Part 1 qualified commercial diver. It took just a few years offshore and on various civil engineering sites for John to realize that recreational scuba instructors functioned

in water with reasonable visibility and relatively warm temperatures. He became a PADI Instructor and headed south.

John later opened a PADI Five Star IDC Centre in Ireland with several partners. He is currently the Director of Training and Quality Management for PADI Americas in California. John's skills column debuts in this issue of *Sport Diver*.



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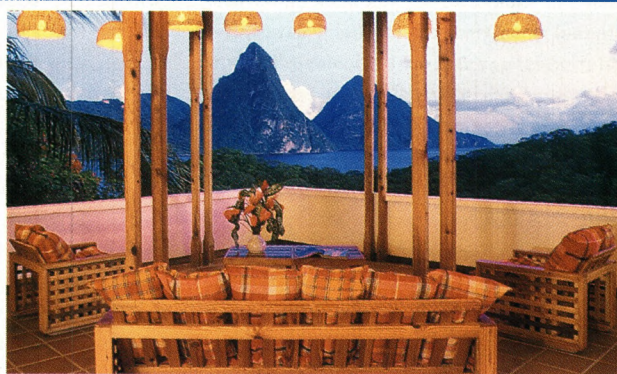
Belize



Turneffe Island Lodge

Turneffe Island Lodge continues to be one of the most consistently dependable resorts in Belize, thanks largely to its excellent staff. Resort accommodations don't come more South-Seas romantic than this; guest cottages built on the beach facing the sea are so artfully tucked away into the surrounding gardens that at first you think you have stumbled onto someone's private estate. Each of the 12 double rooms has a screened porch, and private bath and shower. Located just 10 minutes by boat to the famous dive site The Elbow, known as the best dive site in Belize. Computer divers welcome. Seven-night packages are Saturday to Saturday only and include 3-tank boat dives daily, all meals and round-trip transfers from Belize City.

St. Lucia



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In case you didn't catch the notice on page 6, *Sport Diver* is under new management, or should we say it's back under the original management. After being out of circulation for a year or so, I'm looking forward to getting back in touch with the readership — so keep those cards and letters coming, because we're listening. — *Pierce Hoover*

DIVE ALASKA?

I am a dive charter operator in Alaska. So when I picked up the June 1999 issue, I was thrilled to see the article in Dive Briefs "Dive Alaska"... until I read it. Granted, diving in Alaska is not as well known as in Cozumel, but for the writer to report "Other than southeast there are essentially no dive operators in Alaska" is absurd.

We dive operators in south central Alaska (north of Sitka) are few, but are well known in the areas we operate and

easily available. I operate in western Prince William Sound from Whittier (where the story takes place) and have chartered many notable divers, writers and photographers, who had no trouble finding me.

But this is not strictly about my operation. It is about turning people on to new, exciting, interesting, and even "weird" diving opportunities ... right? This article didn't encourage or inform anyone about the unique and amazing experiences that await those who dive in Alaska.

We can only hope your magazine will give Alaskan diving fair chance. Please, next time take a boat to get you out to the truly outstanding dive sights, and don't wait until November. (August, September, first part of October at the latest.) — Captain Mike Bender, Lazy Otter Charters, Inc.

Can't speak to the writer's experience, but as to diving Alaska, you're on. I love cold water diving. Too late to make it this summer, what with a new baby and all, but I'd love to put together a trip for the summer of 2000. Meanwhile, we'd love to hear more about the region.

TRASH IN/TRASH OUT

Three years ago, while diving at Sipadan my dive partner tapped me on the shoulder and pointed up. The surface was completely covered with hundreds of small plastic bags. As I went to the surface to retrieve as many as possible, I saw a small open "garbage" boat heading toward the mainland filled to the brim, spewing trash onto the reef. What is the point of saving the small turtles if the adult turtles are compromised in an agonizing death after eating plastic bags they mistake for jellyfish?

Let yourself go.



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No waiting in line. No voice mail messages. No www. com anything. Just an exploration of my inner drive and the discovery of my capacity for ecstasy. The human body is made of water and oxygen. It might take another fifty million years for my species to evolve into water breathing creatures. I can't wait that long.



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Part of the answer is reporting these problems to the resort, while another is to encourage divers to bring as much of their non-biodegradable trash home with them for proper disposal. I have frequently seen divers dump their used batteries and plastic trash at these isolated resorts in an attempt to lighten the load on the way home. Let's treat these beautiful outposts as campsites: trash in/trash out. Out of sight is not out of mind for the teeming life on the reef. — Karen Kaempf

Even citrus rinds and other items often considered "biodegradable" are not as quickly broken down as people would believe. Additionally, while such garbage is rotting, it creates an eyesore and a potential danger to marine life. Karen's example is a good one — pack your trash in/pack your trash out.

DON'T SHOOT

I have to respond to the letter Jim Sebourn wrote (in the June issue) about "the worst buoyancy controlled, inconsiderate, uncaring divers" ruining his photo opportunities. I, like many other divers, am in the sport for the joyful experience of getting closer to where we came from, without lugging all this extra equipment. This is not to impugn underwater photography, but to let this person know that these package dives are not for his enjoyment alone.

I have often seen these "photographers" topside, complaining about a missed shot and how someone scared the fish away, completely missing the enjoyment of the dive and the surroundings. If you are that serious about taking pictures, you have no business being on a dive boat

with 16 people.

— Damon Foster

Jim Sebourn's letter stated that "some of the worst buoyancy controlled, inconsiderate, uncaring divers own some of the most expensive camera equipment." That doesn't seem to be an indictment of those who choose not to shoot. However, the point is well-taken that serious photographers may want to find smaller charter vessels with fewer people, if for no other reason than to get the shots they want. In a separate letter last issue, Dan Fitzimmons said: "The best solution would be to allow photographers only to dive with each other."

Since that won't happen, perhaps the only workable answer is for shooters and non-shooters to respect each other's space.

Letters? Send them to Sport Diver Letters, 330 W. Canton Ave., Winter Park, FL 32789 or e-mail to sportdiver@worldzine.com.

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CANADIAN ATLANTIC DIVE GUIDE OUT

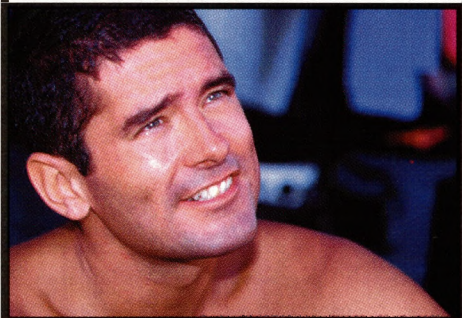
Now available: The 432-page Combined Atlantic Diver Guide, which includes the best dive sites to be found in Canada's four Atlantic provinces.

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The guide retails for \$32.50 plus shipping. Contact Northern Maritime Research at ad514@chebucto.ns.ca.

New Free-Diving Record Set off Grand Cayman

Descending to 250 feet with the aid of a diver propulsion vehicle (DPV), Cayman



dive instructor Kirk Krack set a record this spring in a new specialty category of breath-hold diving. The record-setting event on April 29 in Grand Cayman marked the first recorded time that a DPV has been used in a free-diving category. Krack rode a Mark 7 DPV made by Farallon USA.

Krack, a senior instructor for Divetech, spent two minutes, six seconds underwater, diving on the north wall of Grand Cayman.

The record event conformed to guidelines published by CMAS and the International Association of Free Divers (IAFD).

DIVE BRIEFS

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All your favorite dive adventures. All your favorite destinations. Gear, new products, gadgets. Dive news, great dive shows, instruction, tech tips, travel specials - and soon, even real-time video of ongoing *Sport Diver* expeditions. Whatever you want to know about diving, you can get it at www.sportdivermag.com. With its Web site launch in June, *Sport Diver* magazine unveiled a world-wide scuba diving and travel resource network - a system that provides divers with unprecedented connectivity to resorts, operators, dealers and equipment manufacturers. The new *Sport Diver* Web site offers one-stop access to the entire world of diving.

With our new site plus the kind of resources we've provided in this newly redesigned July/August edition of *Sport Diver*, parent company World Publications culminates a yearlong million-dollar investment in leading-edge database and electronic publishing technology. World can now provide the diving reader and the industry with the same high-powered custom-publication capabilities used by the nation's largest information providers.

Let us scratch your itch for adventure. Let us take you past the ordinary. Explore the recent war wrecks of the Falkland Islands. Experience big shark encounters off South Africa. Or stay near home: Dive on the Revolutionary War bateaux in Lake Champlain or ply a blue hole off Harbour Island in the Bahamas.

If you would rather bone up on photo tips or learn new skills, visit our instruction sites, where experts will lead you through startup and troubleshoot common problems. Want to know about new dive operators, new live-aboards or just who's who in the industry? Visit the news and events pages. And of course, if you need some gear or dive courses, you can find those too, indexed by operator, manufacturer, location, specialty and brand.

Most of all, enjoy the vicarious fun of sport diving in the comfort of your home. And when you've had enough screen dreams, go find an ocean.



More Shark Conservation

Shark report: Atlantic state fisheries representatives will begin developing measures to conserve sharks in state waters - near the shore - following federal action to protect threatened species in off-shore waters. Such action is essential to shark recovery because of the animals' highly migratory nature, the Ocean Wildlife Campaign said.

REEF AWARENESS WEEK SET FOR JULY

Reef Relief, a nonprofit organization in Key West, has scheduled its annual celebration of the coral reef — Reef Awareness Week — for July 25-31. This year's theme is Water Resources Partners ... We all live downstream.

Sponsors and volunteers will spend the week enlisting the support of Keys residents and visitors in protecting the coral reef. The week kicks off with a VIP party and the Reef Awareness Filmfest on Keys television. Activities will include a reef creature sand sculpture contest at Smathers Beach; a sail/snorkel to the Coral Nursery at Western Sambo reef; sea kayaking eco-tours with Bill Keogh; a community clean-up of Trumbo Point; a moonlight sail aboard a historic schooner; and the Grateful Diver photo contest sponsored by PADI Project Aware.

Other events include speeches, a membership meeting, parties and a panel discussion. For more information, contact Reef Relief at 305-294-3100; e-mail: reef@bellsouth.net; Web: www.reefreelief.org.

Hass Honored ... Twice

Pioneer diver, photographer and marine biologist Dr. Hans Hass was presented earlier this year with NOGI awards for his contributions to science and for distinguished service by the Academy of Underwater Arts and Sciences. The Austrian born Hass, 80, is the first ever to receive two awards the same year.

Previous science winners include Robert Ballard, Sylvia Earle, George Bass and Jean-Michel Cousteau. In the category for distinguished service, Hass joins the ranks of Jacques-Yves Cousteau, Phillipe Tailliez and Sea Hunt co-star Zale Parry.

The awards were presented at the BOOT show in Dusseldorf, Germany.

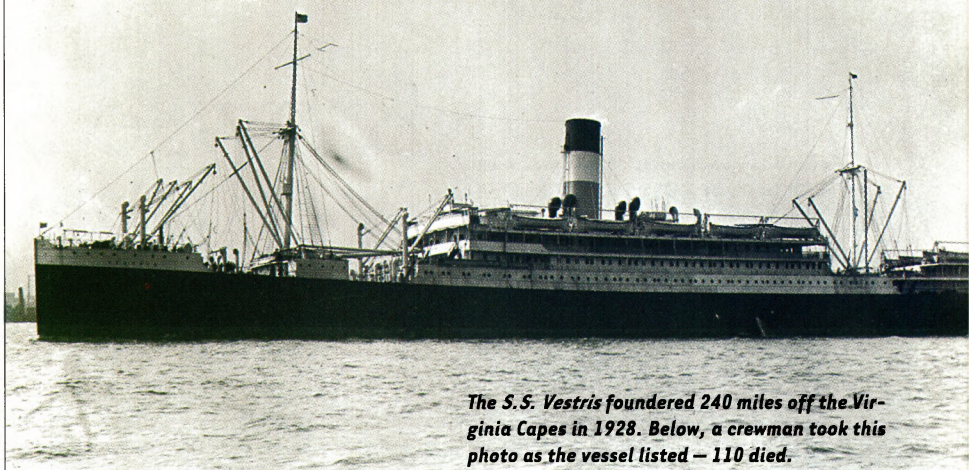


WRECK FACTS

BY ELLSWORTH BOYD

DIVE BRIEFS

California treasure, a mystery Lake Huron wreck, the Vanderbilt's research ship ...



The S.S. Vestris foundered 240 miles off the Virginia Capes in 1928. Below, a crewman took this photo as the vessel listed — 110 died.

Gold Rush Treasure

Gwen Thomas of Torrance, California, has heard conflicting reports on the settlement of the treasure from the *Brother Jonathan* and wants the authentic results.

Thanks to Phil Bergeron and Dave Finnern of the California Wreck Divers for sending the facts and figures on the distribution of coins and other artifacts from the gold rush steamer that sank off northern California in 1865. Deep Sea Research Inc. of El Cajon, California, was awarded more than 1,000 \$5, \$10 and \$20 gold coins it salvaged. The California State Lands Commission retained 200 coins, worth approximately \$1 million, to be distributed to the Crescent City Museum and other state museums. DSR donated all other artifacts to the Crescent City Museum.

The settlement terminates a more than five-year court battle over ownership. State officials, who wanted everything, lost in a historic Supreme Court decision. The U.S. District Court approved a stipulation between both parties in the case, granting title to the wreck to the state while allowing DSR to continue its salvage. Divers will be searching for the ship's safe, which purportedly carried an Army payroll and more gold coins.

David Canales of Westland, Michigan, requests information on a wreck near Harbor Beach, Lake Huron.

A search is difficult without the ship's name, but I did find a possibility in *Shipwrecks of Lake Huron* by Jack Parker

SS Vestris

Jimmy Franklin, a Davenport, Iowa, eighth-grader, is writing a paper about Morse code and asks about its role in the sinking of the SS Vestris.

In 1928, when the Vestris foundered 240 miles off the Virginia Capes, losing 110 passengers and crew, it wasn't for lack of the telegraph officer urgently tapping out Morse code. More likely, it was the captain's delay in ordering the distress signal that proved so costly. The British Board of Trade later declared that Capt. William Carey should have given the order six hours sooner.

The 10,494-ton Lamport and Holt Line vessel, sailing on a Christmas voyage from Hoboken, New Jersey, to Argentina, carried 325 passengers and crew, 6,000 tons of heavy equipment and 3,000 tons of coal. Stevedores had overloaded the Vestris by 200 tons. A Northeaster tossed and rolled the ship all night.

At daybreak, Capt. Carey finally ordered the wireless officer to send an SOS. Several vessels responded and rescued 215 people, but many more lives might have been saved.

(Avery Color Studios, Au Train, Michigan).

The schooner *Chickamauga* foundered off Harbor Beach in 1919. She was a sister ship to the *Chattanooga*, now part of the breakwater at Great Dutch Island. For details, contact the Great Lakes Historical Society, Vermillion, Ohio, and the Great Lakes Maritime Institute, Detroit. Readers who have knowledge of this wreck or others in the area may contact me and I'll pass it on to David.

Franco Perone of Opa-Locka, Florida, asks if anybody has verified the discovery of the *Gil Blas* that sank in 1835 off Hillsboro Inlet, Florida.

The Marine Archaeological Council of Pompano Beach, Florida, has information on this ship. Council members Steve Attis, David Kaplan and Steve Singer have retrieved artifacts they believe are from the *Gil Blas*.

Working in shallow water near the beach, they uncovered the keel of what appears to be a 200-ton, twin-masted Spanish brig. Singer says the *Gil Blas* was on its maiden voyage from Havana to Spain, carrying sugar and cigars, when it ran aground in a hurricane. A brief history of the vessel appears in Singer's book, *Shipwrecks of Florida* (Pineapple

Press, Sarasota, Florida).

Lance Barkok of Massapequa, New York, writes: "I would like information on the research ship, *Alva*, that the Vanderbilt family owned. I believe it sank, and I would like to know where and how deep."

There are two *Alvas* listed in the *Encyclopedia of American Shipwrecks* by Bruce Berman (Mariner's Press, Boston, Massachusetts), but the book gives no details of their demise. Since you're

not far from the Vanderbilt Museum in Huntington, New York, I suggest you call or drop by and ask the curator what happened to the vessel. Readers may also respond if they have further information.

Send wreck questions to Ellsworth Boyd, 1120 Bernoudy Road, White Hall, MD 21161. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a personal reply. Or e-mail sportdiver@worldzine.com.

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HASSON INNOVATION LETS KIDS SAMPLE SCUBA



Wayne Hasson's kids loved the ocean. But though the president of Aggressors International was deep into the scuba market, his children — ages 5 and 7 — were too young to follow in daddy's fin strokes. Kids must be 12 to begin a certification course.

Rather than wait five years, Hasson became proactive. He designed the first Supplied Air Snorkeling for Youth (SASY) system. This summer, SASY debuts with Red Sail Sports in Grand Cayman.

SASY is a custom unit created to allow kids to breathe compressed air and swim at the surface, so they can watch and interact with divers below. Where normal snorkels could leak and frustrate young children, the SASY unit lets them breathe continually while keeping their faces in the water.

SASY uses either a 13- or 19-cubic-foot tank, which fits into a special holder. Two small straps on either side of the tank valve keep the tank from rolling. The holder is bright and easy to see on the surface.

The unit's regulator hose runs from the tank under the arm and is attached so the mouthpiece stays in front of the child. The mouthpiece attachment also is designed to prevent kids from removing the vest and breathing below the surface.

The vest, which incorporates 3/4-inch foam, provides 7 to 8 pounds of buoyancy. It has two adjustments: One is at the shoulders, and the other is a crotch strap. The strap keeps the unit in place and allows the child full use of the internal buoyancy.

The buoyancy is situated so that the child can be upright in the water when he or she is not kicking; swimming can be initiated by normal kicking, and users can swim on their backs.

SASY can be used by children as young as 4 and is endorsed by PADI, NAUI and SSI. An adult version is also available. Income from sales goes to a nonprofit foundation called Oceans For Youth to further educate kids about the ocean.

FOR MORE INFO

FOR RESERVATIONS OR INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAM AT RED SAIL SPORTS, CALL 877-RED-SAIL OR GO TO WWW.RED-SAIL.COM ON-LINE.

Social HammerHeads

Putting the "fun" back in diving appears to be a recurring theme this year with highly touted dive socials and new certification programs. Now, DEMA — the Diving Equipment and Marketing Association, which hosts the annual dive industry trade show — has announced a new program to jazz up the sport.

DEMA has launched HammerHeads, a national

dive social club. Charter chapters in 20 major cities throughout the country have made it their mission to get divers — and snorkelers — together for travel, networking and, of course, fun.

"Our goal is to generate a renewed enthusiasm for scuba diving by encouraging divers to get back into their local waters, and provide a perfect opportunity for potential divers to give div-



ing a try," DEMA executive director Regina Franklin said in a written statement.

HammerHeads clubs have opened in San Diego; Los Angeles/Orange County; San Francisco/Bay Area; Denver; Houston; Seattle; Long Island, NY; Boston; Reading, PA; Philadelphia; Virginia Beach, VA; Charlotte, NC;

Charleston, SC; Atlanta; Pensacola, Jacksonville, Miami/Fort Lauderdale and Tampa, FL; Minneapolis; Chicago; and Detroit.

HammerHeads meet several times a year for beach clean-ups and environmental missions, new diver outreach, group dives, social events and competitions for prizes and dive vacations.

For More Info

For more information on HammerHeads, contact Teresa Penunuri at The Olguin Company at 619-234-0345, or visit the HammerHeads Web site: www.H-Heads.com.

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PADI CHANGES COURSE

Pretend, for just a moment, that you're planning a snow-skiing trip instead of a scuba vacation. Pretend this is your first visit to the mountains, first time to see snow, first time on snow skis.

You fly to Aspen. You rent the gear. You head up the mountain. You tumble down the bunny slope. You're skiing, right? And maybe if you want to graduate to the blue runs by week's end, you take a lesson or two.

Switch plans and think diving. You've never been diving before, but

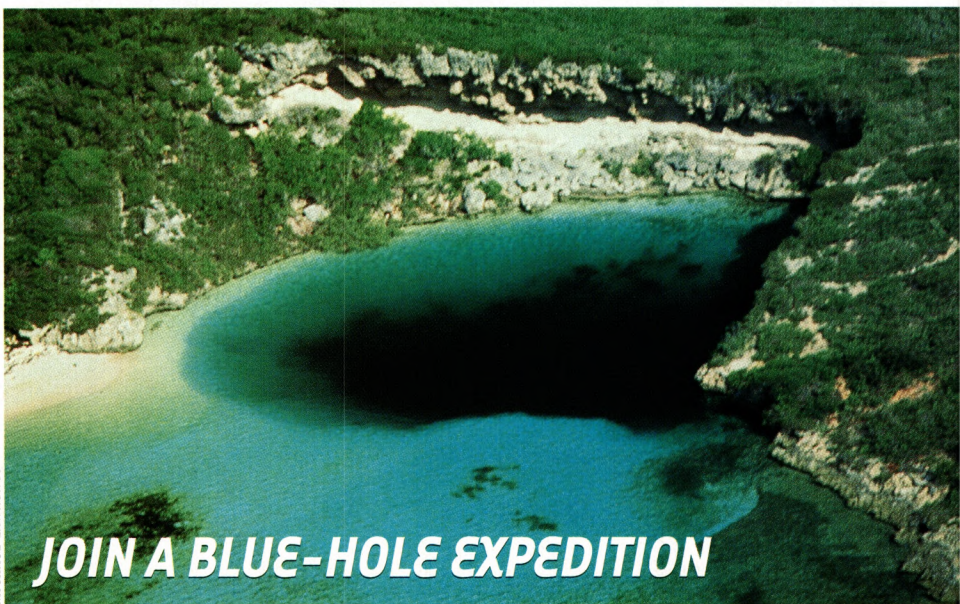
you'd love to see the underside of Grand Cayman.

You call up a dive shop. The owner says, "That'll be three weeks of your time; you'll be tested in water and on paper, and it will cost you \$200 in addition to the purchase of mask, fins and snorkel. Then you can go diving.

"Of course, you can go to Cayman and take a short course. But you'll only get to dive on the shallow reef."

Two different adventure sports, two different approaches. Sportsmen see snow skiing as fun. They see diving as effort.

"Skiers don't have to wait six weeks



MICHAEL LAWRENCE

JOIN A BLUE-HOLE EXPEDITION

Explorers Dan Malone and Brian Kakuk are looking for a dozen qualified divers to participate in Expedition Andros 1999 aboard the M/V Ocean Explorer. The project, which runs October 1-10 and 15-24, will explore both logged and virgin cave systems in the Andros, Bahamas, region.

Applicants must be full-cave certified. The \$2,250 price per person includes meals, drinks, accommodations, air

fills, weights, one-stage bottle and double AL 80cf tanks. Price does not include airfare, airport transfers, alcoholic beverages, gratuity or oxygen/helium.

The expedition departs from Yacht Haven Marina in Nassau. Trip one visits North Andros featuring Couch Sound, Rat Cay, Bob's Bluehole, Guardian and Little Frenchman. Trip two covers South Andros, featuring Benjamin's Bluehole,

Exley's Boiling Hole, Star-gate and far south caves

Team members include Malone and Kakuk; Tom Illiffe, science coordinator; Curt Bowen, cartographer; and Sport Diver's editor, Pierce Hoover.

The team will use film and video to document the caves for television. Cartographers plan to produce a map of the caves. Scientists will collect specimens, including rock and sediment samples.

For More Info

For information, contact Dan Malone at 561-288-4262, fax 561-288-0183, e-mail ocean-exp@aol.com or Brian Kakuk at 242-345-6039, fax 242-358-4557, e-mail bahamacave@aol.com, or visit www.deepdiversions.com/oceanexplorer.

to go down a hill," says Karl Shreeves, PADI's vice president for technical development. "We have the technology in diving now to eliminate the perceived obstacles of a required certification course."

PADI's message to the dive industry: Lighten up.

The next generation of PADI dive professionals will take a friendlier message to the students. "C'mon in. Let's get in the pool right now. I'll show you the gear. When do you get to dive? Well, right away."

For the new millennium, we get the kinder, gentler — happier — PADI.

"In the late 1970s, there wasn't enough professionalism in the sport. PADI tried to set an example," Shreeves says. "Then, over the years, diving got more and more serious. ... It's time to push the pendulum the other way."

PADI's new attitude translates to the classroom in PADI's revamped Open Water certification program. New students will undergo:

1. Five "confined-water" dives in a pool or an environment with pool-like conditions.
2. Five "knowledge development" sections — which can involve classroom sessions or learn-on-your-own CD-ROM sessions.
3. Four open-water dives.

While those may sound like the same old standards, there are two main differences: Students can do their first open-water dive after just one confined-water dive. After three confined-water dives and three knowledge development sections, they can do another open-water dive.

PADI also has introduced a limited Scuba Diver rating similar to a resort certification. After three confined-water dives, three knowledge development sections and two open-water dives, students become Scuba Divers and can dive with a divemaster or instructor.

Shreeves says the new approach should attract people looking for a fun new sport: emphasis on "fun." Fun and safety, Shreeves adds. Safety will always be taken seriously, he says.

Kind of like driving a car. Though drivers must be careful, "it doesn't mean you can't play the stereo, feel the wind in your hair and have a great time on a road trip."



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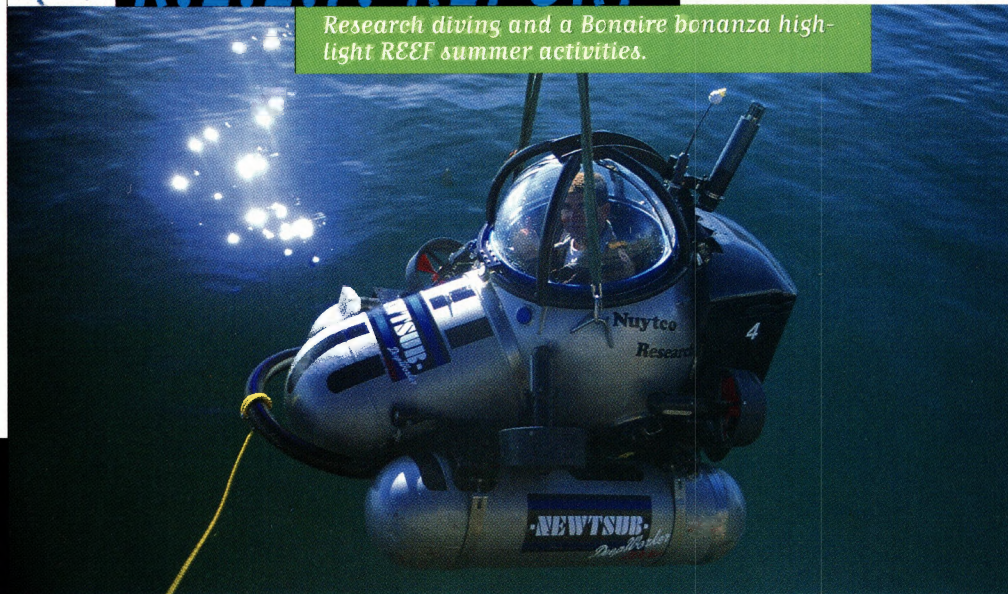
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R.E.E.F. REPORT

Research diving and a Bonaire bonanza highlight REEF summer activities.



SANCTUARY STUDIES INCLUDE REEF

Jules Verne, watch out! The Deepworker 2000 is on the loose. Funded by the Goldman Family Fund and headed by Dr. Sylvia Earle, the Sustainable Seas Expeditions are a cooperative effort between the National Geographic Society and NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program to explore the deep regions of the 12 National Marine Sanctuaries. Scientific studies will be taking place during the five-year project, including REEF fish surveys conducted by Dr. Earle and REEF executive director Laddie Akins. The one-person untethered subs are capable of diving to depths of 2,000 feet for up to eight hours. Watch for numerous updates on the SSE Web site at <http://sustainableseas.noaa.gov>. For more information, contact Justin Kinney, NMSP, (301) 713-3125 or Susan Reeve, NGS, at (202) 857-7015.

Get festive in Bonaire

Deena Feeley, REEF's director of operations, will once again lead talks and activities at the 3rd Annual Bonaire Dive Festival, November 6-13. Sponsored by the Coral Reef Alliance, the festival engages divers for a week of world-class lectures, seminars, activities and, of course, great diving!

Key speakers for the event have included Dr. Robert Ginsberg, Dr. Sylvia Earle, Dee Scarr, Burt Jones and Maureen Shimlock, and others. Activities and talks will range from underwater clean-ups to photography, coral surveys to fish ID contests and seminars. For more information and to join the festival, call 1-800-BONAIRE.



SCHILLINGER - A STANDOUT

With more than 15,000 REEF members, it might seem difficult to single out one person for recognition. But member No. 834 stands out above the REEF. Longtime volunteer Linda Schillinger was recently honored in Fort Lauderdale

as REEF Volunteer of the Year.

Residing in New York, Linda works to dive. She has been an active REEF member since 1993, joining in on 11 field surveys. She has conducted more than 300 surveys, becoming one of

Coral sex set for September

Divers in the Caribbean over Labor Day — particularly September 3 — should plan on a special late-night excursion to see the recently discovered phenomenon of coral reproduction.

Once a year, corals around the Caribbean lose their inhibitions and spawn like ... well, corals. The large star corals seem to be the most predictable, releasing their gamete bundles on the seventh or eighth night following the August full moon.

Look for the main activity to begin about two to three hours after sunset and last for about 45 minutes. You also may see spawning by mountainous star corals and brain corals. Scientists also will be studying this spectacular event.

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C CHANGE — PADI REDESIGNS CARDS

Newly certified divers will be receiving something different in the mail from PADI after they complete their c-card paperwork: Certification cards with a colorful new look.

By popular demand from students and PADI professional members, the front of the new certification cards are designed with a photo of a diver/dolphin encounter, by Michel Verdure, prominently displayed on the front. "This new, beautifully designed certification card benefits everyone," said Brian Cronin, PADI Senior Vice President Business Development and International Business. "Divers show off their diver status, 5 Star PADI Members still receive gold card distinction, and PADI is branded as the choice in dive training."

The colorful card replaces the old cards for student certifications from PADI Scuba Diver to Master Scuba Diver levels, and lets divers express themselves and their favorite pastime: diving.

The new card is made with the same water-resistant material and still features the student's name, birthdate and certification number, instructor member number and/or dive center/resort member number. Check out the new silver and gold card designs in the PADI Today section of www.padi.com.

Cayman Madness



Occasionally, diving takes on a new dimension. It takes you over the edge, into the blue. It becomes a religious experience. Some would say that is Cayman Madness.

But for the uninitiated, Cay-



SPLASH!

Pushing the envelope on the "Diving Is Fun" theme, Barbachano Tours has announced dates and itineraries for Splash '99 — that hedonistic, fun-soaked, weeklong dive fiesta that's been held in Cozumel for the last 15 years.

These people know how to play.

As Barbachano executive vice-president Mark DiMartino explained: "This IS a

social type event." Adults-only type social. Oh, and there's some terrific diving tossed in, too.

Splash '99 runs four consecutive weeks, from October 2 through October 30, at Club Cozumel Caribe. Divers sign up for one of the four eight-day/seven-night packages, which start on a Saturday and end the following Saturday. The event is limited to a total of 1,000 divers, about 200-250 per week.

DiMartino said the event draws divers from around the United States; most come in groups, though individuals or couples may sign up and be paired together for events.

Those events include such exotic fare as a Walk on the Wild Side costume contest, where contestants cross-dress; a Star Wars bash; and a homemade bikini contest (no cloth allowed — think peanut butter and coconuts).

Two-tank dive trips are offered in the mornings and afternoons, and major dive manufacturers such as Sea & Sea, Tusa, Henderson, Mares and Princeton Tec sponsor gear testing, contests and giveaways.

Combine that with all-you-can-eat buffets, an underwater night treasure hunt and all the sunshine you could want, and Splash '99 just might rank up there with the most total dive experience you've ever had.

Cost, which includes hotel, food and airfare, ranges from \$999 for travel out of Miami to \$1,440 out of Seattle.

FOR MORE INFO

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT
BARBACHANO AT 800-327-2254.

man Madness is a festival — a week of diving, social activities, gear testing and general dive camaraderie. Bob Soto's Diving Ltd. has hosted the event for the last six years.

The Cayman Madness eight-day/seven-night dive package will be offered for six weeks (Thursday through Thursday) beginning September 9 and ending October 21. The \$999 package includes round-trip airfare from Miami, Tampa or

Houston; round-trip transfers in Grand Cayman; seven nights' accommodation; six days of unlimited diving; parties and dinners; and an Underwater Treasure Hunt with more than \$50,000 in prizes.

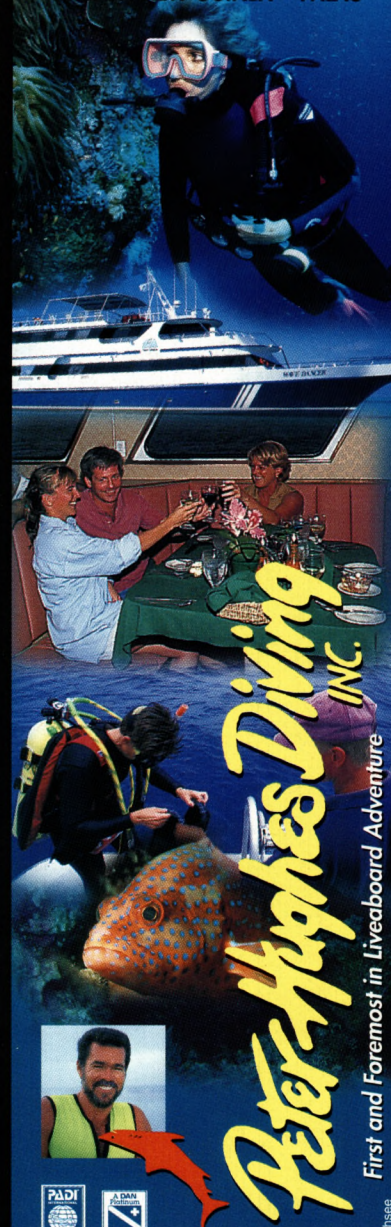
Dacor will bring a variety of regulators, gauges, computers, BCs and other gear for guests to test dive. Sea & Sea Underwater Camera Systems will supply cameras, lenses and strobes for testing.

For More Info

Call your dive shop or travel agent. If you need assistance, call Bob Soto's Diving at 800-BOB-SOTO; Caribbean Dive Tours at 800-346-3483; or PADI Travel Network at 800-729-7234.

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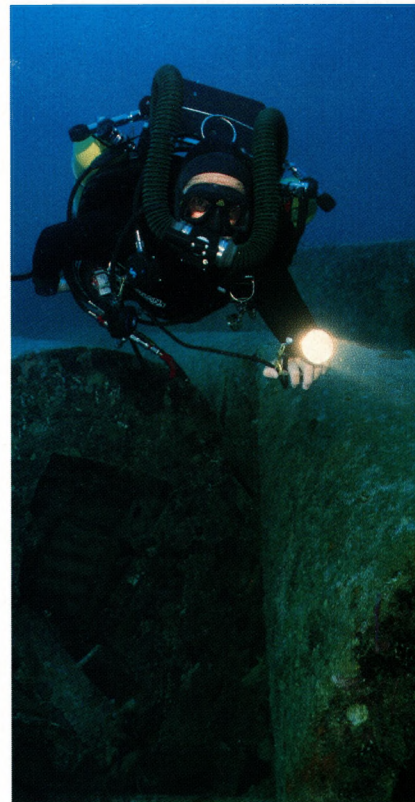
Hit IANTD's Diving Technologies Conference

Got a tech-diving addiction? Or just interested in learning about mixed-gas diving, cave and wreck exploration? You'd better pack it up and check out the Diving Technologies Conference this fall in Fort Lauderdale.

The International Association of Nitrox and Technical Divers (IANTD)

is sponsoring this two-day event Oct. 16-17 and offering weeklong training sessions before and after the conference.

The Diving Technologies Conference will include presentations on wreck, cave and deep diving exploration, DPVs, rebreathers and diving physiology. Discover the latest frontiers in tech diving, the latest decompression models, oxygen toxicity theories and other trends in medicine and physiology. Debate with experts and



panel participants, see the newest gear and talk to manufacturers.

Training weeks run Oct. 9-15 and Oct. 18-24. Courses will include everything from open-water certification to trimix, technical and wreck instructor training. Contact IANTD for details.

The conference will be at the Marriott Hotel on 17th Street Causeway in Fort Lauderdale and at the adjacent convention center. For conference and hotel information, contact The International Diving Technologies Conference '99, 5000 Goodrich Road, Clarence, NY 14031; 716-741-2811; DiveTech@iantd.com. E-mail IANTD at iantd@ix.netcom.com; or visit their Web site at www.iantd.com.

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Oxygen regs recalled

Divers Alert Network has announced that Allied Healthcare Products is recalling all oxygen regulators sold under the Life Support Products (LSP) brand. The recall is to replace aluminum components in the unit's high pressure chamber with brass components. The recall follows reports of unexplained fires and explosions. Contact: Recall Coordinator, 800-231-5273; e-mail RRC@alliedhpi.com.

TIPS FOR TRAVELING DIVERS

Travelers who want to minimize risks associated with overseas destinations should research medical care and safety concerns before they go, according to International SOS Assistance. The organization recommends adhering to these health and safety precautions prior to traveling:

1 Carry prescription medications in their original, labeled containers to help ease the process of customs when traveling abroad.

2 Avoid not only tap water and ice cubes, but also local dairy products and raw or uncooked foods in many countries since such products can lead to digestive problems. Drink bottled water.

3 Update vaccines and immunizations for prevalent diseases and research the health risks and the availability of medical care in the area where you will be traveling.

4 Make copies of your airline tickets, itineraries and passport. Leave one at home and carry another copy in a

separate piece of luggage in case the originals are lost.

5 Travel in pairs or groups, especially at night. Walk with confidence and remain alert.

6 Avoid wearing designer clothes and expensive jewelry.

7 Carry small amounts of money and wear a money belt close to your body.

Explore the Ice-Water Mansions

Take a virtual journey back in time to the days when schooners and steamers ruled the Great Lakes by exploring through photos and guides seven shipwrecks off Wisconsin's Lake Superior.

A Web site titled *Ice-Water Mansions: Shipwrecks of the Apostle Islands* is located at www.seagrant.wisc.edu/shipwrecks. The site features historical images of the ships, photos of the wrecks from archaeological investigations and accounts of the vessels' histories and final voyages, including the fate of the three-masted schooner *Lucerne*.

The *Lucerne* departed Ashland, Wis., in 1886 loaded with 1,256 tons of iron ore and bound for Ashtabula, Ohio. Hit by a violent, sudden snowstorm, the ship sought shelter in Chequamegon Bay. Four days later, the Madeline Island lightkeeper discovered the ship's masts jutting from the water. Three bodies were found frozen in the rigging in 6 inches of ice.

The Web site also recounts the fate of the 372-foot steel bulk carrier *Sevona*, the 338-foot wooden schooner-barge *Pretoria* and four other vessels.

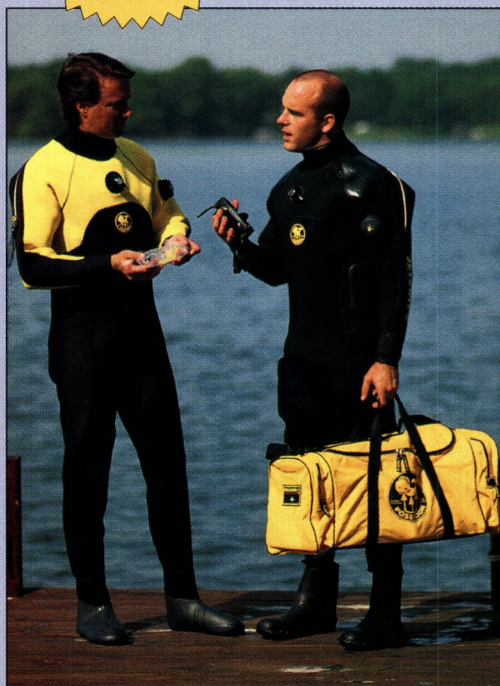
A set of dive guides is also available through the University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

For More Info

Visit the Web site or call the historical society at (608) 264-6493.

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With better buoyancy control, diving is not only easier, it's more enjoyable. Follow these basic steps to improve your efficiency.

Peak Performance Buoyancy

There's no denying that peak performance buoyancy control separates the dive paddlers from the pros. When all the big talk is over, and the water closes over your head, there is nothing that pulls the whole scuba diving thing together like perfect buoyancy control. If you drift effortlessly through your dives, if you can hover undetected only inches from delicate tube worms, and if you can, without a second thought, make a safety stop with your chest at 15 feet, you might just want to pat yourself on the back and move on. If you think there may be room for improvement read on ...

I've often watched divers cobble weight belts together with bits and pieces from a rental or charter boat stash and wondered just how many of them knew exactly how much weight they needed or where to best position it. I wondered particularly hard about divers about to make their first dive in a thick wetsuit who had perhaps been certified in warm water.

It takes a few dives to get comfortably familiar with the significant weight needed with lots of rubber. Not getting this fundamental buoyancy issue right has consequences ranging from simple inconvenience to the potential danger of an uncontrolled descent with too much lead.

WALT STEARNS

SETTING UP YOUR WEIGHT BELT

While still in pre-dive prep mode, fuss a little as you set up your weight belt. If you have absolutely no idea where to start, get an approximation from your local dive center, resort or instructor (courses, complete with cool videos and wonderful books, are available in Peak Performance Buoyancy).

Lay your weights on the floor and think about configuration. You'll usually be looking for a symmetrical setup. For most dives, you will probably want to keep the bulk of your weight forward on your hips, so it acts like the keel on a sailboat as you swim. For vertical wall dives, you might want to shift the weights back. Leave at least three or four inches between the nearest weight and your buckle. Use belt slides to anchor weights.

If you have an integrated BCD and weight system or a combination of an integrated system and a weight belt, make sure that ditching either your belt or the weights in the integrated system results in positive buoyancy.

Running through an imaginary dive with an eye to buoyancy control reveals a few interesting details. Many of these require total mastery of the obvious.

Real buoyancy control begins, as does any dive, with pre-dive preparation. As you pack and check your equipment, double check to make sure nothing has changed that could affect initial weighting.

New wetsuit? Major factor. Nice, springy wetsuits need more weight than old rancid flatties. A fresh suit has more inherent buoyancy at first because diving, especially deep diving, simply bursts its bubbles.

New BCD? Unlikely to have a major effect at this point, but it will in the water.

New weight belt? Maybe a nifty new shot belt? Take a moment to make sure the new compares well to the old. Stick 'em on a bathroom scale, often there is variation between claimed and actual weight.

New cylinder? Another biggie. Some cylinders are negatively buoyant when full and simply less negative when empty; others sink first and float later. Good to know, but largely irrelevant given a proper buoyancy check (with your lungs half full, you should float at eye level with no air in your BCD). But the fact that your average cylinder loses about 5 pounds as it empties, gets you thinking about the buoyancy change in a tank and is a good reminder that it's best to do a buoyancy check with a nearly empty cylinder before you dive.

This is obviously a bit of a pain, so add about 5 pounds to your weight if you have done your buoyancy check with a full one. You can always take a moment and recheck buoyancy before you exit.

Now for the dive itself. Understand why feet-first descents have many

advantages: One is that it's easiest to completely empty your BCD in this position. Double check that the point where the deflator hose attaches to the bladder is really the closest point to the surface as you prepare to descend. It's often helpful to dip your opposite shoulder. Exhale, and if you're properly weighted you should sink slowly.

Keep your hand on the BCD inflator and get ready to add controlled bursts of air to adjust your descent rate. You'll add more as the descent continues. If you're making a deep dive for the first time, it can be a bit of a surprise to see just how much air you have to add as you continue.

During the dive, enjoy the fruits of your labor. Concentrate on what happens as you breathe. If you see something interesting below you, exhale and drift down for a look. Inhale and you'll level off and start to rise. Don't vary your breathing habits too much though, breathing slowly deeply and continuously is of primary importance.

Keep the point about BCD positioning in mind while making gradual ascents, too. It's easy to trap some air in an unfamiliar BCD, which will continue to expand as you ascend.

On deeper dives, and given neutral buoyancy, you should only have to start swimming up a little before expanding air takes over. Make sure you're ready to vent this off as need.

As you near the surface, stop at 15 feet. After three minutes, kick slowly for the surface. If you have done everything right, there should be no air in your BCD as you break the surface. You should also now be floating at eye level, rising a little as you inhale and sinking slowly as you exhale. If this is not the case, make appropriate adjustments before your next dive.

BUOYANCY CHECK

NEW WETSUIT? Major factor. A fresh suit has more inherent buoyancy at first because diving, especially deep diving, simply bursts its bubbles.

NEW BCD? Unlikely to have a major effect at this point, but it will become significant as soon as you jump in the water.

NEW WEIGHT BELT? Maybe a nifty new shot belt? Take a moment to make sure the new compares well to the old. Stick 'em on a bathroom scale, often there is considerable variation between claimed and actual weight.

NEW CYLINDER? Another biggie. Some cylinders are negatively buoyant when full and simply less negative when empty; others sink first and float later.

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After years of hopeful waiting, the technical community now has a rebreather suited to the real-world demands of exploration.

The Reality Rebreather

A few years back, the mere mention of a rebreather was enough to get the undivided attention of a technical diver. At trade shows, dive equipment companies could lure crowds simply by displaying a non-working prototype or "pre-production" version of what they promised would be the next great scuba technology.

Next came "rebreather experiences" — the high-tech equivalent of a resort course — which allowed rebreather wannabes to spend a few minutes in a swimming pool with the unit du jour. Finally, a handful of companies actually offered rebreathers for sale to the public.

To date, however, the much hyped "rebreather revolution" has failed to take the diving industry by storm. A handful of professional photographers and videographers is using converted closed-circuit military systems to sneak up on fish, while at the other end of the spectrum, recreational divers in search of new underwater activities are experimenting with much simpler semi-closed-circuit units.

Meanwhile, after its initial wave of excitement, the tech-

REBREATHAR REFRESHER

Confused by the terminology of closed and semi-closed rebreathers? Here's a simple explanation of the key differences.

A closed-circuit rebreather allows a diver to breathe the same gas over and over while the machinery removes carbon dioxide by means of a chemical "scrubber" and replaces used oxygen and inert gases from onboard storage tanks.

The advantages of closed-circuit systems include extreme gas consumption efficiency, silent operation and the ability to deliver the optimum gas mixture for any depth. Disadvantages center around the complexity of the machinery, the need to carry separate bailout gas, and the significant risks of hypoxia or hyperoxia in the event of an equipment failure.

Semi-closed systems also remove carbon dioxide by means of a chemical reaction but add a small, steady supply of pre-mixed breathing gas to replenish oxygen levels. Because fresh gas is constantly "leaking" into the system by means of a mechanical valve, semi-closed systems are typically less complicated to service and operate and frequently contain no electronic components.

Semi-closed systems are typically less complicated to service and operate and frequently contain no electronic components.



RONALD DE AMORIM

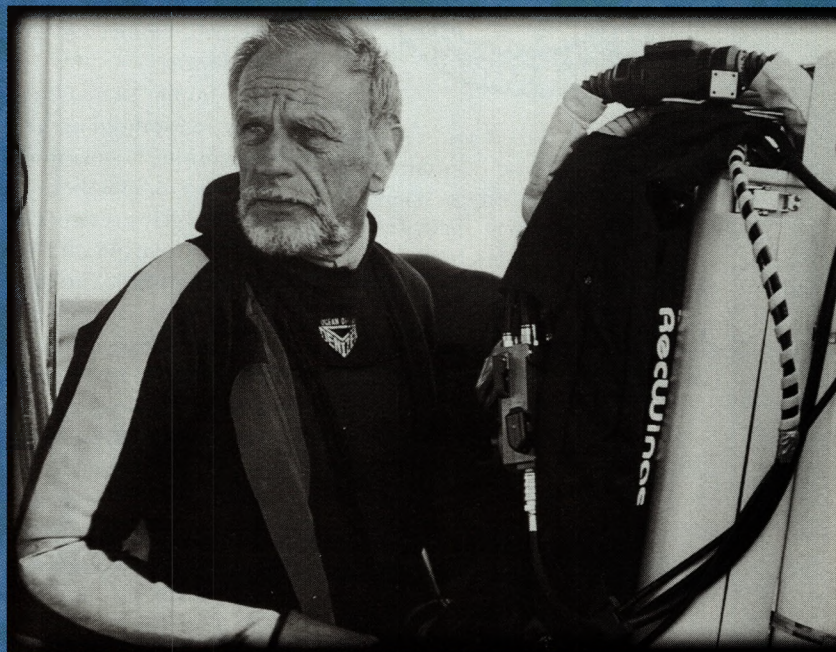
Halcyon's semi-closed-circuit rebreather shows the most promise for the technical community. A fully mechanical system, it operates on a unique variable-ratio, passive gas addition system. Divers can expect gas duration at depth equivalent to surface consumption rates.

Accept No Compromises

Whether you are going to experience the underwater world for the first time or if you are looking to expand your horizons to the cutting edge, you deserve to train to the highest standards in the industry. With training programs that include all levels of Openwater, Nitrox, Trimix, Cave, Wreck, and every Rebreather, it's easy to see that IANTD is the one training agency that can fulfill all of your training needs. With new training materials and the continual refinement of our programs, IANTD continues to lead the industry by offering superior training and customer service. Join IANTD today and train to be the best diver you can be!

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FS = Fill Station
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 DAT = Deep Air Training
 WT = Wreck Training
 IT = Instructor Training
 RT = Rebreather Training
 DT = Dive Trips
 IDT = Ice Diver Training
 BB = Bahamas Blue Holes
 TT = Trimix Training
 CT = Cave Training
 GBT = Gas Blender Training

The Ocean Corporation



What are the odds of your becoming a commercial diver in today's market? Pretty good if you happen to choose—and graduate from—The Ocean Corporation.

Located on the Gulf of Mexico (commercial diving central), The Ocean Corporation consistently locates more jobs than they can provide graduates for. . . perhaps because there are more than 30 diving companies located within 325 miles of the school's Houston base. Approximately one-third of all entry-level commercial divers entering the industry learn how it's done at The Ocean Corporation.

The list of accomplishments that The Ocean Corporation and its students have piled up is an impressive recommendation in itself: the first commercial bell diver program, the first US dives inside a nuclear power plant (and the first school to offer training for that), the first school to include surface welding as part of the diver training program. . . the lists of firsts goes on and on. The professionalism of The Ocean Corporation was further illustrated when they became instrumental in developing the training standards for entry-level commercial divers for the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

If it's a career in commercial diving, there's not much of a question on where to go: The Ocean Corporation. For further information contact them at: 1-800-321-0298.

nical diving community is still wondering how it can put rebreathers to work in the real world of advanced diving.

To date, sophisticated closed-circuit units haven't fully proved themselves in terms of long-term reliability in real-world conditions, ease of use and maintenance in the field, and self-rescue ability. As a result, few explorers are willing to grant total life-support dependency to a complex collection of microelectronics and electro-mechanical devices.

Simpler semi-closed systems have gained a foothold in the general diving community, but many of these units are designed to operate in the same depth and duration ranges as traditional scuba: great for photographers who want to minimize bubble noise and for divers who wish to dive warm, moist nitrox mixtures, but of little use to deep, wreck or cave divers.

The system that currently shows the most promise for the technical community is the Halcyon. It is a new type of semi-closed, fully mechanical system that operates on a unique variable-ratio, passive gas addition system. In brief, this means it adds gas in direct relation to your breathing rate, incorporates a proprietary depth compensation device that increases gas efficiency with depth, and does not depend on sensors or electronics.

As a rule of thumb, divers can expect gas duration at depth equivalent to their surface consumption rate. This means an efficient diver could get three hours of bottom time from a standard 80cf tank at a depth of 300 feet. In addition, the mixture divers breathe is almost exactly the mixture contained in the supply tanks — which means no guessing or fudging on decompression obligations or oxygen loading and no need to "fly" the system manually in the event of a system failure.

In the demanding environment of real-world exploration, the Halcyon

rebreather is proving to be a viable tool. In the past year, the list of deep-wreck hunters, cavers and explorers who have embraced the Halcyon reads like a "Who's Who" of tech diving. Recently, explorers involved in the Woodville Karst Plain Project (WKPP) have used the Halcyon to make record-setting dives in the deep cave systems of north Florida, running more than 6.5 miles underground at an average depth of 285 feet.

The more I learned about the Halcyon, the more I was impressed. Now, I have joined the ranks of Halcyon owners and recently completed a six-day training program with Errol Kalayci and several members of the WKPP team.

By the time I finished the training program, I was sold on the system's ability for self and buddy rescue and especially on its ability to provide multiple solutions to potential problems, culminating in a fast, easy switch to familiar open-circuit technology.

An additional noteworthy safety feature of the Halcyon is its ability to provide direct mechanical feedback to the diver. On fully closed systems, a diver must either devote a portion of his attention to the constant monitoring of gauges and sensor readouts or place total trust in the machine as he goes about the dive.

With the Halcyon, as with open-circuit scuba, the diver feels the onset of potential complications. After all, it's one thing to dive a rebreather in a pool, where one's only task is monitoring gauges and readouts, and quite another to press it into service on a mixed-gas excursion three decks into the *Andrea Doria* or 9,000 feet into a siphoning cave passage.

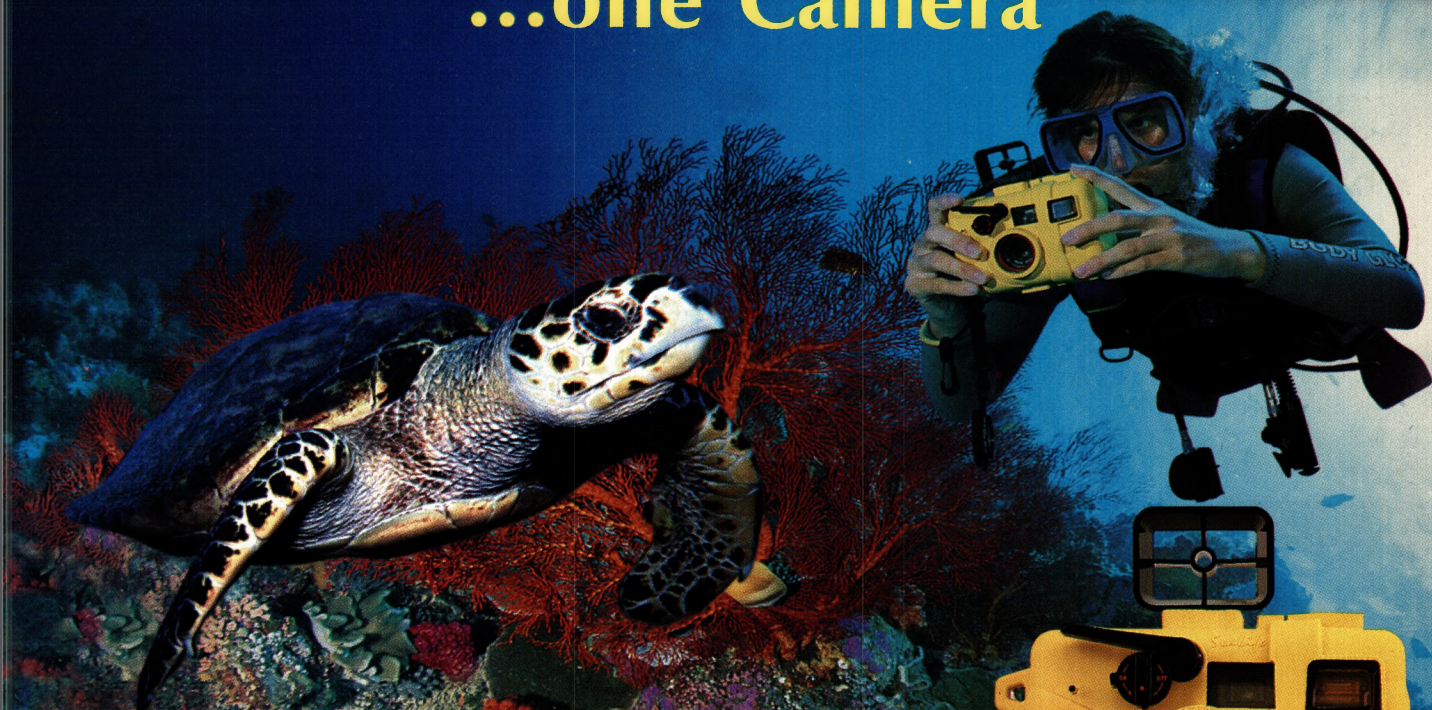
This column isn't long enough to do justice to a detailed description of the Halcyon system. For those of you who want the full scoop, I'd suggest a visit to the company's Web site (www.halcyon.net) or a call to 954-462-5570. ■

Spearfishing specials

This summer, you'll have two chances to see the world's best spearfishermen in action. On July 25, Beuchat will host the International Tournament of Champions, which will be followed by the U.S. National Spearfishing Championships on July 30. Both events will take place in the waters of Islamorada in the Florida Keys, and both will be headquartered at Robbies Marine. For more information, call Beuchat at 800-248-0005.

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ON THE WILD SIDE

Adverse conditions are one thing, but have you ever experienced the South African Zodiac plunge?

First, you suit up at the dive shop. Then you hop into a Jeep, towing a Zodiac loaded with all your gear.

At the beach, your dive guide drives to the surf line. You hop out and slide the Zodiac off its trailer. "Push like hell," the dive guide commands. You do . . . through the sand and into the crashing 5-foot waves. (Time it right or you may flip backward.)

You finally make it to the site and have a great dive. Back on board, your dive guide "guns" the motor and speeds at full throttle toward the beach, surfing the crashing waves. "Grab on," he says as you approach the sand. You white-knuckle it. Good thing, too, because you come to a dead stop a few seconds later.

The trick is to hold onto the Zodiac ropes with one hand and your camera with the other. And don't let go no matter what!



Due to the relatively low light level on an ice dive, you should shoot with a medium-speed or fast film. Lake Baikal, Siberia. Nikonos V, Nikonos 15-mm lens, Kodak Kodachrome 200.

Marco Polo, one of the world's greatest explorers and adventurers, had a timeless expression. He said, "An adventure is misery and discomfort, relived in the safety of reminiscence."

In other words, when you're diving in adverse, nasty conditions, you may be wishing you were home. However, when you get home and share your stories, you forget all about your discomfort and only remember the good stuff. In fact, your experience becomes an enviable adventure to your listeners.

With Marco's expression in mind, I thought I'd write a column for those of you who want to dive and take pictures when the wimps are sitting around the pool.

But first, remember this tip: When shooting in adverse conditions, you must be 100 percent familiar with all your camera controls so you can make adjustments quickly. Spend time in your local swimming pool . . . shooting, shooting and shooting.

ICE DIVING: The big photographic challenge when ice diving is dealing with the freezing or near-freezing temperature — and keeping warm. A drysuit is a must, but you can choose gloves or mittens.

Gloves give you easier access to camera controls, but they don't provide max-

QUESTIONS?

Have a question for Rick? E-mail him at RickSammon@aol.com. Also, check out his Web site: www.ricksammon.com.



Camera Care

In all difficult conditions, taking care of your gear is extra important. Before and after each dive, clean your O-rings and tighten knobs, screws, nuts, bolts and synch cords. Soak your camera overnight to get the salt and sand out of hard-to-get-at places. Recheck camera controls. Don't underestimate the importance of maintaining your gear.

TOP & RIGHT: RICK SAMMON

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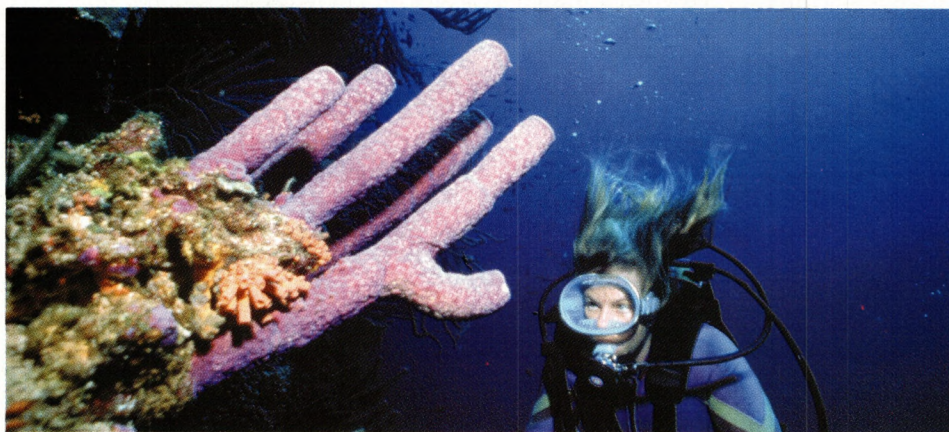


Curaçao



"Where the fun shines night and day"

Did you know there is an island in the Caribbean where there is more than just great sun, sand and sea? Did you also know there is an island in the Caribbean whose Capital has just been put on the World Heritage List by the United Nations?



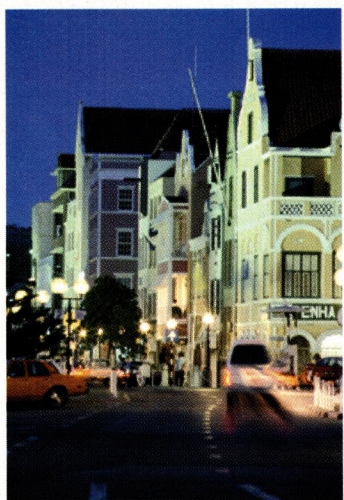
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Diverse People

With more than 50 nationalities, Curaçao blends all the best of the Caribbean with sophisticated European flair and a distinct Latin flavor. Located 30 miles off the coast of Venezuela, it was discovered in 1499 by Alonso de Ojeda. Most of the islanders speak four languages: Dutch, English, Spanish and the native Papiamentu (a mixture of Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, French, English and several African languages).

A Walking Museum

The island's Dutch heritage lives in the beautifully, pastel colored architecture. The capital, Willemstad, was placed on the world heritage list in 1998 by UNESCO. Walking around this Caribbean version of Amsterdam is like strolling through a coloring book, with a rainbow waiting around every corner. Here you can

visit the oldest synagogue still in use in the western Hemisphere with its sand floor. Explore Fort Amsterdam, built by the Dutch after 1634 or visit our Postal, Maritime or brand new Afro-Caribbean museums. Sip a tropical drink at one of the European style cafes and watch ships enter the seventh busiest harbor in the world, which runs right through the middle of Willemstad.

Exquisite Shopping

After walking by the 17th and 18th century buildings, shop the town with the **American Express® Card** for quality jewelry, watches, crystals, and gifts from all over the world at **Boolchand's D'Orlahn Jewelry, Clarisa Jewelers, Freeport Jewelry & Gifts, Freeport Duty Free Limited, Gandelman Jewelers, Little Switzerland, Peltenburg Design or Mexico Lindo**. Find Dutch cheese, European chocolates, the original Curaçao Liqueur at **Alex Drugstore** and **Weekenders**. Buy world class cameras, video recorders and electronics at **Boolchand's** and **Freeport Bargain Center**. Name-brand clothing at **Benetton, Little Holland, New Amsterdam Store, Penha & Sons, Tommy Hilfiger**. And spritz fine European colognes, perfumes and cosmetics at **Alex Drugstore, La Casa Amarilla, or Penha & Sons**.

Great Adventure

If you are the adventurous type, rent a car from **Hertz, Budget** or **National Car Rental** with your **American Express Card** and explore the countryside. Great plantation homes (landhuizen) dot the landscape and recall life in the 17th and 18th centuries when islanders raised aloe,

corn, livestock or mined salt. Enjoy the natural beauty of Christofel Park, a national park where you could enjoy the flora and fauna of the island and hike up mount Christofel, the highest peak on the island (1239 feet). Afterwards visit one of the 38 white sand beaches for a swim or snorkeling excursion.

Explore More

Visit **Hato Caves**, where you could go deep into the bowels of the island and enjoy artifacts and paintings of the first inhabitants of the island or visit one of the largest Seaquariums in the Caribbean. Diving in Curaçao is one of the best kept secrets in the Caribbean. With abundant corals and underwater creatures, Curaçao boasts one of the best off-shore diving in these waters.

Cosmopolitan Nightlife and Gourmet Dining

Lively casinos, nightclubs and gourmet restaurants abound in Curaçao and warmly welcome the American Express Card. Here you can enjoy Dutch, French, Italian, Argentinean, Swiss, Indonesian or Caribbean cuisine. See Willemstad by night in a old fort, at **Restaurant Fort Nassau**, atop of a hill overlooking Willemstad or at one of the forts at the entrance of the harbor at **Bistro Le Clochard**. Come savor the fine cuisine that travel experts rave over.

If you're a music fan, the Salsa Festival brings together some of the region's most celebrated international performers including Grand Combo, Oscar D' Leon and Rey Luis, during August. In October, the annual Jazz Festival brings a Latin beat.

Add to all this a welcoming people who share their love of life with guests, and you have the recipe for a perfect vacation.



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PADI

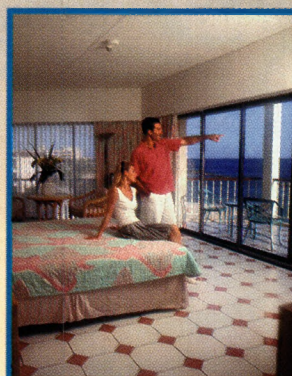


Lions Dive Hotel Curaçao

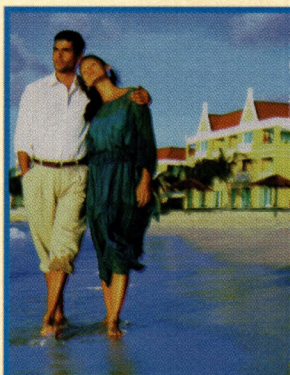
Charming Caribbean style accommodations located on the beach and at the national underwater park next to Seaquarium. Charming colorful accommodations in tropical surroundings with 72 ocean view air-conditioned rooms with balcony or terrace. Facilities include an IDC Padi 5 star dive operation, extensive healthclub facilities, swimming pool, sailing and windsurfing, open air dining, free access to Seaquarium, free shuttle bus to town.



Operated by ForStar Hotels, under conversion to Sheraton. Enjoy an unforgettable vacation at Curaçao's most elegant beachfront full-service resort. Enjoy our watersports, scuba diving, 2 restaurants and after dark, visit the Happy Hour and try your luck at the Las Vegas style casino.



With 341 modern rooms and suites and a five star Peter Hughes Dive Center, you'll be charmed by the white sandy beach flowing into the crystal clear blue waters. Complimenting our rooms are amenities such as coffee maker, safe deposit box, direct dialing and data port facilities, all of which makes us a full-service resort.



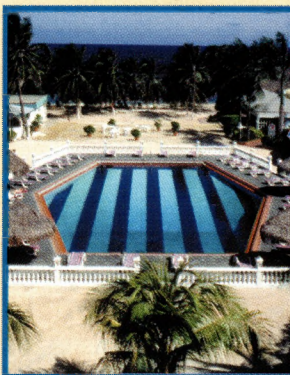
Sonesta Beach Resort & Casino Curaçao

A luxurious beachfront resort located only 10 minutes from the International Airport Hato and 5 minutes from town. The Sonesta Curaçao features 248 beautifully appointed guestrooms and suites, each with private balcony or patio overlooking the Caribbean Sea.



Avila Beach Hotel

Treat yourself to this delightful historical beach front Governor's mansion surrounded by lush tropical gardens, and tempt your palate to any of our fine restaurants. The ideal place for the discriminating modern traveller.



The Hotel with the friendly touch has many facets, it's located on the beach and in walking distance of the world famous shops of historic Willemstad. With 200 comfortable rooms, 2 restaurants; Denny's (24 hours) and Giorgio Ristorante serving the finest traditional and international dishes, 2 Bars, a Padi 5 Star Dive Center, 2 lighted tennis courts and largest Casino on the island.



A 325-seat Auditorium, an Executive Congress Center and the 24,000 sq. feet Exhibition Hall cater to conferences, meetings and conventions of up to 900 people and 100 booths, while offering the latest in audiovisual capabilities.

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Cards

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During this Quincentennial celebration is the perfect time to visit our island. American Express brings you fantastic packages at some of our great hotels. Book your stay in Curaçao at one of these fine hotels with the American Express Card for travel between June 1 through December 15, 1999 and receive a **\$100 American Express Gift Cheque** per booking with our compliments.*

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With your booking,
you'll also receive one of
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\$500 in discounts
to help you enjoy the shopping,
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** One card per person.



3 night/4 day prices
starting at: **\$139*** pp.

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

*Rates are LAND ONLY, per person, double occupancy, including airport/hotel transfers, taxes and service in a Run of house room at Curaçao Casino Resort. Valid on new reservations booked and paid with American Express Card for travel June 1, 1999 through December 15, 1999. Certain Blackouts, holiday and weekend surcharges may apply. Prices accurate at time of printing, subject to change and availability.

CST# 1022318-10 UBI# 6004 69694-0004

TA-149 ML# 1192

Other packages available at higher prices.



Travel



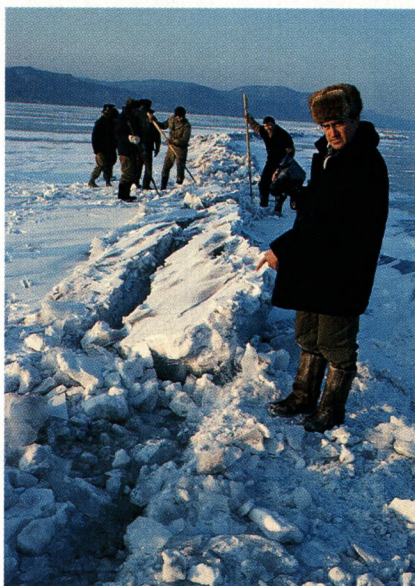
Cards

The Official Card of Curaçao



www.curaçao-tourism.com

www.americanexpress.com



RICK SAMMON

Cold-water precautions: Watch for ice ridges, like this one over a 5,000-foot-deep lake, while on the way to your dive site. Lake Baikal, Siberia. Canon A2, 24-mm lens, Kodachrome 64.

imum warmth. Your hands will stay warmer longer with mittens, but making camera adjustments is a challenge. I wear mittens because I don't like my hands to get cold. Plus, I've practiced

at home making exposure and focus adjustments while wearing my mittens.

If you are a novice ice-diving photographer, shoot in the automatic mode and pre-set the focus and exposure controls topside. All you'll have to do underwater is click the shutter release.

I would also suggest taking wide-angle pictures. Wide-angle pictures capture the experience of ice diving, and wide-angle lenses offer good depth of field. You'll get pictures with lots of the scene in focus. After you're comfortable shooting wide-angle pictures under the ice, try some macro shots.

For your first ice-diving adventure, shoot print film, which has a wider exposure latitude than slide film. Basically, this means that your exposures can be "off" and you'll still get a good print.

Film choice is also important. Under the ice, the light level is significantly lower than in the tropics. You want to use a medium-speed or fast film (ISO 200, 400 or 800). These films let you shoot at small apertures

for good depth of field. Slower films are less sensitive to light and require shooting at wider apertures.

All films become brittle in the cold. The colder it gets, the more brittle it becomes. Keep your film warm. Also, keep your camera warm until you make the plunge or your batteries will grow weak or even die. In addition, it's a good idea to pack extra batteries.

ROCKIN' AND ROLLIN' IN ROUGH SEAS: Several dive destinations offer "rock 'n' roll" to and from the dive sites at no charge. No, I'm not talking about the music we hear over the airwaves. I'm talking about the experience of diving from Zodiacs and dinghies in rough water.

When seas are up, the scenario goes something like this: Divers get into the bobbing dinghy. Cameras are handed to guides and placed on the boat's planking. The dinghy shoves off with the divers holding on so they don't fall off; the smart divers are also holding their cameras. At the site, divers do back rolls into the water.



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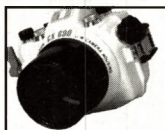
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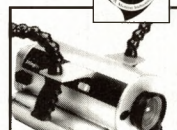
Nikon



SEA&SEA



AQUATICA



- OUR LOWEST PRICES EVER ON AQUATICA HOUSING PACKAGES! Packages include dome and macro ports. Call for details.
- CAYMAN BRAC PHOTO/DIVE TRIP FROM OCTOBER 16-23, 1999 presented by Helix Underwater and the Nikon School of Underwater Photography. Call Helix for more information. Sign up today-space is limited!
- Call for special low pricing on display, refurbished, and imported Nikonos cameras and lenses.
- DIGITAL! We have a complete stock of digital cameras including Canon's XL-1 and Optura and Sony's VX1000 and TRV 900. We also have editing systems. Call us for details on accessories and housings.
- Wide range of underwater video packages available- call for details.

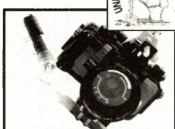
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ikelite



UNDERWATER PHOTO TECH



AMPHIBICO



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Surfacing, they swim like mad to get back to the dinghy to get their cameras. They finally do their dive in relative calm. But when it's time to surface, things get rough again.

In these conditions, it's essential to have your strobe arms and camera tray securely attached to your camera. The jostling can loosen bolts and screws. It's also important to use a lanyard on your camera so you can attach it around your wrist before the guides let go of your camera. (Be sure to go over this handling procedure before you leave your dive boat.)

To avoid a scratched or smashed lens while your camera is riding on the planking, cover your lens or housing port. For added protection, wrap your rig in a towel. Once underwater, be sure to check and tighten your rig periodically. — *Rick Sammon*



Despite video's popularity in today's age of digital camcorders and PC-based editing software, there seems to be a shortage of useful information on the art of creating underwater videos. As videographers around the world

know, it's one thing to understand the workings of a camera and quite another to use that camera to create a coherent, entertaining product. For instance, unlike still photography, video can involve an entire dive team or group. You could begin

CORRECT EXPOSURE

If you were confused by some of the information in *Sport Diver's* May/June Test Dive column on cameras under \$500, you weren't alone. The story and chart contained incorrect information about several of the models featured. Some prices were wrong; some features and options were not included. Below, *SD* has reprinted the specifications on all the cameras, including contact numbers for more information.



RTS EPOQUE ET-100 PLUS

FEATURES: Focus-free 34-mm lens; three aperture settings; low-light LED warning; internal flash; motorized film advance; DX coded.

OPTIONS: Sportsfinder; close-up lens; pro color-enhancing filters; ES150 external flash; camera kit (ET-100 Plus camera; Pelican all-weather case; sportsfinder; extra O-ring set and grease, strap and manual.)

DEPTH RATING: 150 feet

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION: High-impact plastic. Colors: yellow; gray/yellow; gray/teal; gray/salmon.

COST: \$199.95 (camera only); \$269.95 for the cam-

era kit (see options).
PHONE: 516-242-6801



RTS EWA MARINE BAG

FEATURES: Flexible housings with optical grade lens ports; perfect for single-lens reflex and video cameras; pack light; no O-rings to seal; internal brackets for proper camera positioning; aiming grips.

OPTIONS: Over 30 models; sizes suitable for still and video cameras including digital and professional models; integrated dive weights available.

DEPTH RATING: Varies, up to 160 feet

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION: Multi-layered, ozone-resistant, PVC,

transparent sheathing; rust-proof screw closure; metal waterproof seal.

COST: \$59.95 to \$399
PHONE: 516-242-6801



BONICA SNAPPER

FEATURES: Fixed-focus 35-mm f/8; 1/125 shutter speed; auto DX ISO 100, 200, 400 film sensing; built-in autoflash; auto wind/motorized rewind.

OPTIONS: Neon strobe, macro kit, close-up kit

DEPTH RATING: 150 feet

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION: Clear, high-impact plastic housing

COST: \$129

PHONE: 800-220-8463



CANON SURE SHOT A1

FEATURES: Large viewfinder; built-in flash; macro lens; auto film handling.

OPTIONS: None

DEPTH RATING: 16.4 feet

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION: N/A

COST: \$250

PHONE: 516-828-4040



IKELITE AQUASHOT 3

FEATURES: Single-use disposable 35 mm; built-in flash; 27-exposure film.

and an editor.

I have always felt that if you think you're interested in video, your most important first step should be familiarizing yourself with the different tasks that must be performed. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to work with someone who already has the equipment. By joining a team, you'll learn valuable lessons about the video process and what aspects interest you most.

As part of a team — or even as an individual videographer — you should begin by fine-tuning your buoyancy control. At any given minute, one may need to frame a subject, direct light, change exposure, propel around objects and change buoyancy.

Such techniques can be borrowed from a typical two-day cavern course. The elements that make cavern divers so efficient can be applied to purposeful move-

ment while shooting underwater videos. Like cavern/cave diving, underwater videography requires that you manage tasks simultaneously.

Whether you take the course or not, you can improve your skills by experimenting before a dive with just how little weight you can wear. Properly weighted, you'll find less need to constantly adjust your buoyancy, and you'll use less air, allowing for more shooting time.

Another important tip is to inspect your gear for dangles: hanging lights, gauges or straps with the potential to snag. Use snaps and bungee to tidy up these reef-damaging and video-stopping problems.

Wes Skiles is a professional videographer whose work has been seen on the Discovery Channel, the Learning Channel, CBS and TBS.

Next issue: Shooting basics.

OPTIONS: Accessory package: macro kit, underwater strobe, correcting lens, travel bag.

DEPTH RATING: 125 feet

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION: Optical-grade glass lens, built-in handgrip, sportsfinder, accessory shoe.

COST: \$90 (with an Aquasnap camera).

PHONE: 317-923-4523



IKELITE AQUASHOT 3E

FEATURES: Drop-in APS film loading; three format selections; motor drive film advance/rewind. Uses Fuji Endeavor-10 or Fotonex-10 cameras.

OPTIONS: Accessory package: macro kit, underwater strobe, underwater correcting lens, travel bag.

DEPTH RATING: 125 feet

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION: Optical-grade glass lens, built-in handgrip, sportsfinder, acces-

sory shoe.

COST: \$100 (housing only); \$150 (with camera).

PHONE: 317-923-4523



SEA & SEA MX-10

FEATURES: Built-in 32-mm f/4.5 lens, flash and light meter; variable aperture setting; LED indicators: flash ready light, low exposure warning; automatic film load advance and rewind; DX coded for ISO 100/400. Lenses can be changed underwater.

OPTIONS: Close-up lens; 20-mm lens; macro lens and framer; strobes; custom case; lens caddy.

DEPTH RATING: 150 feet

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION: Yellow, high-impact polycarbonate.

COST: \$429

PHONE: 800-732-7977



SEA & SEA MX-5

FEATURES: Built-in auto flash; 28-mm f/6.5 lens; auto load/wind/rewind; sportsfinder; LCD display: film load confirmation, frame counter, low-battery warning, flash ready light; self timer and red eye reduction modes; DX coded for ISO 100/400; translucent body in four tropical colors.

OPTIONS: Maintenance kit

DEPTH RATING: 130 feet

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION: Corrosion-resistant, ABS molded polycarbonate.

COST: TBA **PHONE:** 800-732-7977



SEALIFE REEFMASTER RC

FEATURES: Top-of-housing viewfinder; amber flash; auto exposure; auto wind/rewind; dry carrying case.

OPTIONS: Macro 3x lens; external flash; custom kit (carrying case, macro lens, care kit, antifog desiccant, tip book).

DEPTH RATING: 164 feet.

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION: Bright yellow, armored rubber housing.

COST: \$189 (camera only); \$219 (w/case); \$249 (w/case and close-up lens).

PHONE: 800-257-7742



SEALIFE REEFMASTER CL

FEATURES: Top-of-housing viewfinder; built-in flash; auto exposure; auto wind/rewind.

OPTIONS: Macro 3x lens; dry carrying case; external flash.

DEPTH RATING: 164 feet

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION: Clear, lexan housing.

COST: \$169 (camera only).

PHONE: 800-257-7742

When you buy name-brand gear, children's snorkel equipment is much more than "kid's stuff."

Just for Junior



When we were growing up, the only "children's dive gear" on the market could be purchased at the local five-and-dime, and it was probably decorated with mermaids and starfish or bore the likeness of a certain mouse. By contrast, our youngsters have it made. A number of mainline dive gear manufacturers have recognized the importance of the children's market and are now offering downsized equipment built of the same materials and to the same quality standards as their full-size products. Why should our kids have it better than their parents? With regard to snorkeling, better gear makes for a better overall experience — and no more struggling with cheap, leaky masks, ill-fitting wetsuits, uncomfortable snorkels or flimsy fins. Equip the little ones with well-made, functional snorkel gear, and you'll not only find that they are more willing to accompany you on family dive trips, you may also help foster a life-long love of the sport.

GEAR ROUNDUP

ACTION PLUS



BARE



BEUCHAT



MODEL	Seastar spring suit, Dolphin full suit	Jr. Combo, Jr. Full, Jr. Shorty, Sprint	5.5-mm long-sleeve shorty, 1.5-mm tropical shorty
SIZE/AGE RANGE	age 11 & up	sizes 8-16 (Full & Shorty), 6-16 (Combo), 2-8 (Sprint)	3 sizes; ages 8-10, 10-12, 12-14
COLORS	black & yellow with purple, blue or teal	assorted	black
FEATURES	2-mm construction, flatlock seams, back zip	Combo: twin Velcro shoulders allow for growth; Full & slalom: flat seamed for comfort with nylon one skin for insulation; Sprint: 1.5-mm neoprene with Lycra sleeves	Polarfleece flex panels on sides of tropical shorty, titanium plush lining on 5.5-mm, U.S. models sold without integral hood
RETAIL PRICE	\$70, \$92	\$39, \$59, \$79, \$99	\$129
CONTACT INFO	(Ph) 800-942-7587 (fax) 626-965-7326 www.action-plus.com	(Ph) 604-533-7848 (fax) 604-530-8812 www.bare-wetsuits.com	(Ph) 305-548-3483 (fax) 305-548-4199

DACOR



DIVESKINS



HARVEY'S



HENDERSON



IST



MODEL	Kidz	Kidskins	Shorty, Jump, Farmer John Combo	Kid's Lycra, 2-mm Shorty, 2-mm Jump-suit	Kid Jump Suit & Shorty
SIZE/AGE RANGE	sizes 2-10/ age 4 & up	3 sizes; ages 5-12	sizes 2-4 & up	sizes XS to XL; 20-pound child and up	S,M,L; age 4 & up
COLORS	black & yellow or blue	black-pattern, black-green	black with yellow, green, purple & blue	pink, blue, yellow	orange, blue, yellow
FEATURES	2.5-mm Thermoskin neoprene body, Lycra arms, contoured fit, octopus or shark character on chest	tight-weave nylon/Lycra fabric, front zip with chafe protection flap, stirrup feet	leg and arm zips in full suits, sewn and glued construction, nylon II	anatomical patterns following adult styling, flatlock stitching, nylon 2 lining.	3-mm body, full kneepads, soft collar, back zip
RETAIL PRICE	\$49	\$49.95 - \$73.95	\$86, \$172, \$206	\$39.99, \$54.95, \$99	\$44, \$69
CONTACT INFO	(Ph) 800-323-0463 (fax) 847-446-7547 www.divedacor.com	(Ph) 800-827-DIVE (fax) 888-827-3483	(Ph) 206-824-1114 (fax) 206-824-3323 www.harveysdivesuits.com	(Ph) 609-825-4771 (fax) 609-825-6378 www.hendersonusa.com	(Ph) 416-609-0123 (fax) 416-609-2393

BODY GLOVE



Spring, Full

size C-00; age 6 months & up

black plus bright accent color

flat-lock stitching with non-chaffing thread, extended zipper for easy entry, anatomic patterns and ankle gussets in Jr. sizes, key pockets

\$36.95 - \$99

(Ph) 800-678-7873
(fax) 310-320-7950
www.bodyglove.com

What to Look For

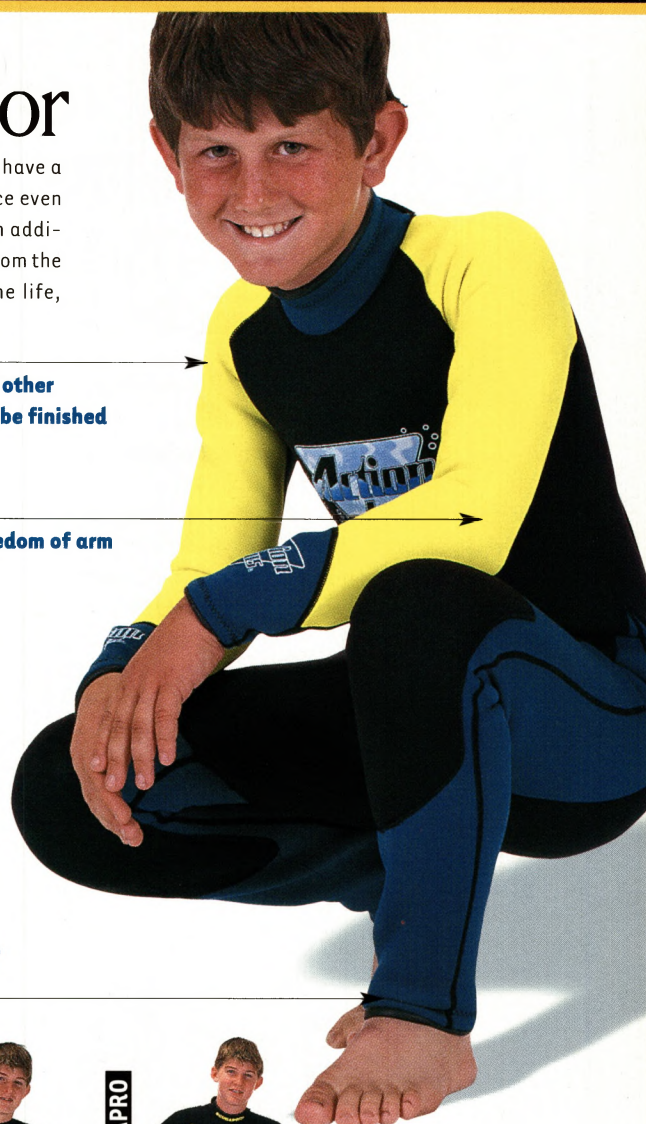
Exposure suits are a must in cold water, but they also have a place in temperate and even tropical conditions, since even 80-degree water can leach heat from small bodies. In addition, wetsuits and skin suits can provide protection from the sun and from environmental hazards such as marine life, coral and sharp rocks.

FRICTION-FREE CONSTRUCTION: Interior seams and other potential friction points such as neck seals should be finished in a way that does not chafe the wearer.

ARMS FREE: Thinner sleeve materials allow for freedom of arm movement.

EXPANSION PLAN: Top-quality children's suits are built on anatomically correct patterns and may incorporate flex panels or contoured seams that allow for freedom of movement and growth.

SNUG SEAMS: To minimize water entry, some suits use gussets or zippers to seal around small ankles.



MARES



Kid's Shorty, Jr. Shorty, Jr. Full

S,M,L; age 4 & up

black & black, gray or blue; assorted Kid's colors

2-mm neoprene body, back zip with zipper tab, age-specific sizing, leg gaskets, soft neck seals

\$48, \$59, \$79

(Ph) 203-855-0631
(fax) 203-866-9573

MOBBY'S



Kid's Spring Suit, Kid's Beach Shoes

child's XS - L

yellow/blue

suits: 2-mm neoprene, comfort seams, CSC neck lining, seamless seat; shoes: 2-mm neoprene, non-slip sole

\$19.95, \$40

(Ph) 877 4MOBBYS
(fax) 972-602-9268
www.mobbys.com

OCEANER



Skookum Shorty, Cowabunga one-piece Full - short or long sleeve

sizes 1-5; age 5 & up

black & blue, black, purple & magenta

3-mm neoprene, 5-thread interlocking mauser stitch, taped seams, front/back zip styles, bound edges, wrist/ankle zippers

\$74, \$120, \$138

(Ph) 604-273-0030
(fax) 604-273-0201
www.oceaner.com

O'NEILL



Toddler Spring, Jr. Hammer Spring, Jr. Hammer Full

sizes 1-3, 4-16

black/blue, black/silver, black/silver/navy black/pine, black

Flat-lock seams, 2-mm snakeskin chest and back, side panels designed for maximum flexibility

\$49.95 - \$129.95

(Ph) 800-538-0764
(fax) 800-538-2085
www.oneill.com

SCUBAPRO



Pacific Sport Steamer

XS & up, age 6 & up

black/blue/yellow

3-mm neoprene construction, spine and kidney pad, fully gusseted zipper, bound edges

\$130.95

(Ph) 800-467-2822
(fax) 619-402-1550
www.scubapro.com

MODEL

SIZE/AGE RANGE

COLORS

FEATURES

RETAIL PRICE

CONTACT INFO

Mask/Snorkel/Fins



Your kids deserve the best, but how can you separate the good stuff from the dime-store knockoffs. Easy — just apply the same criteria you used when you bought your own mask, snorkel and fins. Children's masks should have tempered glass or strong polycarbonate lenses, supple silicone or high-quality PVC

skirts, and buckles and straps that are both comfortable and uncomplicated to don and adjust. Depending on the children's ages, smaller models of adult masks may also fit their faces. Purge valves help keep snorkels dry, but of more importance is the quality, size and design of the mouthpiece, which should adjust and align for comfort. Some brands also offer replaceable mouthpieces. Full foot fins offer simplicity but may have a limited lifespan on a growing child. Closed-heel fins, by contrast, may fit through several seasons. No matter which style you choose, make sure the foot pocket will not chafe or cause discomfort. A soft rubber or composite foot pocket is superior to hard plastic models.



MODEL	Spirit Fins	Mini Pro	Original, Slim Fin
SIZE/AGE RANGE	3 sizes closed heel, open heel sizes 2-12; ages 3-12	Infant 13 - size 2; age 4 & up	age 6 & up
COLORS	blue/black	blue and black	black, blue, pink
FEATURES	semi-vented fin for easy kick, Kraton soft foot pockets for use without boots, swiveling adjustable buckles, open-heel fins fit three shoe sizes for growth.	open-heel design with vented blade and high side rails for stability, sold in poly mesh carrying bag	Comfort Instep feature allows fin to adapt to growing child, adjustable open-end foot pocket, Bungee heel strap.
RETAIL PRICE	\$29.95 - \$34.95	\$20	\$99, \$110
CONTACT INFO	(Ph) 305-548-3483 (fax) 305-548-4199	(Ph) 800-323-0463 (fax) 847-446-7547 www.divedacor.com	(Ph) 800-FIN-SWIM (fax) 805-564-8240 www.forcefin.com



CONTACT INFO	Jr. Mask/Snorkel Set	Bambino, Optimo Jr., Oceo Series/Bambino Snorkel	Mini Pro	Guppy Goggles, Guppy Grand, Guppy Gills (snorkel)	M25 & M53 masks, S9 Snorkel
SIZE/AGE RANGE	age 8 & up	5 sizes/ages 3-14	age 4 & up	ages 5-10, 10+	age 5 & up
COLORS	pink, blue, yellow	blue & black	blue, black & yellow	yellow, blue, pink	blue, yellow, pink
FEATURES	PVC skirt, tempered glass lens, purge valve	masks: labeled by age, stain-resistant available black skirt, tempered glass lens; snorkel: built-in mask strap retainer, replaceable silicone mouthpiece.	soft PVC skirt, 4-mm tempered glass lens, vented snorkel has small mouthpiece	masks: tempered glass lens, double-seal silicone skirt, numbered strap adjustment; snorkel: purge valve, adjustable silicone mouthpiece, integral mask retainer, replaceable valve and mouthpiece.	rubber or silicone skirt, tempered glass lens/ soft PVC mouthpiece
RETAIL PRICE	\$18	\$26, \$29.95, \$18.95 - \$21.95, \$5	\$18	\$11.25, \$19.95	\$15, \$25, \$6
CONTACT INFO	(Ph) 800-942-7587 (fax) 626-965-7326 www.action-plus.com	(Ph) 305-548-3483 (fax) 305-548-4199	(Ph) 800-323-0463E (fax) 847-446-7547 www.divedacor.com	(Ph) 847-357-1813 (fax) 847-357-1848 info@guppy-gear.com	(Ph) 416-609-0123 (fax) 416-609-2393 http://webhome.globe.balserve.net/tigullio

GUPPY GEAR

IST

MARES

SCUBAPRO

SHERWOOD

TUSA

Guppy Gliders, Super Gliders

3 sizes open heel, 4 sizes closed heel; age 4 & up

yellow, blue, pink

molded EVA fin blades, extended heel & full foot pocket, quick-release rotating buckle with pull tab, positive buoyancy

\$19.95, \$29.95

(Ph) 847-357-1813
(fax) 847-357-1848
info@guppy-gear.com

Kids Fin, Velox Full Foot

size 1 & up; age 5 & up

blue

vented blade, open-heel design grows with child, soft rubber pocket in closed heel

\$14

(Ph) 416-609-0123
(fax) 416-609-2393

Tropic, Clipper

sizes 9-11 and up

lime, magenta, yellow

Techrolene blade, soft foot pocket, full-foot design

\$29.95

(Ph) 203-855-0631
(fax) 203-866-9573

Young Fins

size 4 and up

blue, yellow

soft foot pocket

\$25

(Ph) 800-467-2822
(fax) 619-402-1550
www.scubapro.com

Shoreline F3 Full Foot Fin

size 13 infant & up

black, blue, yellow

high-thrust blade design, all-rubber self-draining foot pocket

\$32

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(fax) 716-283-2356
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TEST DIVE

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TIGULLIO ANGEL FINS

ONE OF THE GUYS I DIVE WITH REFUSES TO REPLACE HIS 20-YEAR-OLD, STIFF-AS-A-BOARD BLACK RUBBER FINS. HE SCOFFS AT MY NEW COMPOSITE-BLADE FINS, EVEN THOUGH REPEATED swim fin races have proved that mine are faster.

"Yours are too soft and flexy," he says.

"They are designed to flex and channel the thrust," I explain. "It's the difference between a paddle and a hydrofoil."

"OK, but when I'm pushing a heavy load against a current, I'll stick with the paddle," he counters.

Or, he could get a pair

of Tigullio's new Angel fins. I've been testing these fins for the past few weeks and in timed swim-offs, they were able to hold their own against the three models I consider the current benchmarks for the industry.

Company



But if you push hard, the Angel fins will really move some water. It's a feature my old-school friend would appreciate,

and he wouldn't have to know about the increased hydrodynamic efficiency.

Other high points include the comfortable, off-set foot pocket and strong side rails. — *Pierce Hoover*

literature describes the Angel fins as having a laminated blade that "cups, scoops and channels thrust" — which is what modern, hydrodynamic fins are supposed to do. But unlike the fins I often favor, which have an exaggerated channeling effect, the Angel fins seem to combine forward thrust potential with a bit of old-fashioned "backbone."

Cruise easy and you will enjoy low-effort mobility.

SUMMARY

A high-tech fin that also stands up to a load. Suggested retail is \$149. For more info, call Tigullio at 416-609-0123, or go on-line at <http://web-home.globalserve.net/tigullio>

Beuchat Master Lift Evolution BC

IN RECENT YEARS, THE BUOYANCY COMPENSATOR MARKET HAS DISCOVERED DIVERSIFICATION AND SPECIALIZATION. DIVERS CAN NOW CHOOSE FROM A DAZZLING ARRAY OF TRAVEL BCS, TECHNICAL BCS, tropical BCS, female-specific BCS, hard packs, soft packs, backpack-style harnesses and modular BC systems.

Meanwhile, a significant portion of the diving public needs and wants nothing more than a good all-around BC that offers comfort, support and durability. This is the market Beuchat is going after with its new Master Lift Evolution BC.

Evolution is a good name for the product. Rather than "revolutionary" new trends, the designers have incorporated evolutionary improvements onto a proven style of general-purpose BC. The jacket is constructed from rugged 840-denier nylon, with an air cell that allows 360-degree circulation around the tank and divides buoyancy between

back and waist areas.

A traditional hard backplate is made more comfortable by an adjustable lumbar support bar, and the contoured tank plate and stainless-steel cam provide complete tank security and stability.

The depth-compensating cummer strap and plush back padding provide secure support both on the surface and in the water, while the quick-release shoulder straps allow for changes in exposure suit thickness and make entry and exits safer and easier.

The Evolution has sufficient lift for cold-water diving, and the integrated weight release system is especially well designed for use with gloves. The jacket expands away from the diver when inflated, and the deep side pockets are easy to reach, even when the BC is filled.

Standard features include four stainless-steel D rings, three pull-dump ports, an integrated weight system and a compact inflator hose that tabs to the shoulder by means of a hook-and-loop fabric pad.

In short, it's a well-designed, general-purpose BC that will take you from the ice to the tropics. — *Pierce Hoover*

SUMMARY

A thoroughly modern version of the all-around BC. Designed for both a comfortable fit and performance in a wide range of diving conditions. Suggested retail for the weight-integrated version is \$429. For more info, call 800-248-0005 or e-mail Beuchat@worldnet.att.net





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POSEIDON DIVEPACK

IF YOUR CURRENT BAG IS BULGING AT THE SEAMS — OR IF IT'S BLOWN THOSE SEAMS — YOU ARE A CANDIDATE FOR AN EXTRA-LARGE BAG LIKE POSEIDON'S DIVEPACK.

The layout is traditional gear/backpack style, but details make the difference. For example, the side pockets are deep and wide enough to each hold a pair of Poseidon's largest Forza fins. Likewise, the bag's top strap adjusts, allowing persons of different heights to pull it comfortably through airports. Or, if circumstances call for extended carrying, simply deploy the concealed shoulder and waist straps, adjust to fit and transfer the load to your back and hips.

Two features I particularly like are the padded exterior compartment — great for segregating and pro-

tecting smaller items that require rapid access — and the internal hangers located at the top of the bag. In the transport mode, you can clip regulator or computer bags to these hangers, thereby assuring they don't slip into the mix at the bottom of the bag.

When you are ready to check the bag, you can remove the expensive, fragile items from the internal hangers, hide the straps and present a clean package to the baggage handlers.

If you do manage to fill this extra-big bag to zipper-straining capacity, you'll be glad to know that the heavy-duty zippers are specially designed to curve inward for easy closure under a load. — *Pierce Hoover*

i SUMMARY

An extra-big dive bag with some clever features designed to protect and segregate your gear and to make transport less tiring. Suggested retail is \$220. For info, call 516-231-4475 or e-mail sfuninc@aol.com.



Sherwood Shadow Plus

A FEW YEARS AGO, SHERWOOD INTRODUCED THE MINIMUS, A SECOND STAGE DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR USE AS AN OCTOPUS. THIS low-profile model was about a third smaller than conventional regs and lay flat against a BC.

By design, the Minimus had a higher cracking pressure than standard regulators, was less susceptible to free flow and more tolerant of abuse.

The new Shadow Plus is a logical evolution of the original Shadow concept. The unit includes a Minimus second stage and a special Y-fitting that allows the regulator to lie flat against the body and to line up with the BC air hose. When attached, the mouthpiece faces inward and can be brought to the mouth easily with a no-look grab from either hand.

The Shadow-Plus requires slightly more breathing effort than those costly, specially

designed inflator/regulator combos, but in return, it offers simplicity, reliability, superior resistance to free flow and a significant cost savings.

— *Pierce Hoover*



i SUMMARY

A simple, reliable way to streamline your dive rig. Suggested retail is \$195. Call 716-283-2270 or visit www.sherwoodscuba.com for more info.

Cressi-sub XSI

MOST NORTH AMERICAN DIVERS REMEMBER CRESSI-SUB AS THE COMPANY THAT MAKES THE BIG RONDINE GARA FINS WORN BY FREE-DIVING LEGENDS LIKE JACQUES MAYOL AND UMBERTO PELIZZARI. BUT IN REALITY, CRESSI-SUB IS A FULL-LINE GEAR MANUFACTURER and a major player in the European and world dive markets.

On a recent dive trip to Cuba, I had the chance to demo the company's new XSI regulator in both sport-diving and technical-diving conditions.

The first stage is a straightforward balanced piston design that incorporates two high-pressure ports and four angled low-pressure ports set on a swiveling base. Personal experience proved this regulator's ability to deliver an ample gas supply at any practical diving depth and work load. A check of the engineering stats confirmed my impressions: The XSI meets and exceeds rigid European UNI EN250 standards.

The second stage is set in a stream-

lined thermoplastic polymer case that incorporates a molded exhaust tee and a large, easily-accessed purge button. Other than a top-mounted

dive/pre-dive lever, there's no means — or need — to fiddle with the internal air-delivery mechanism.

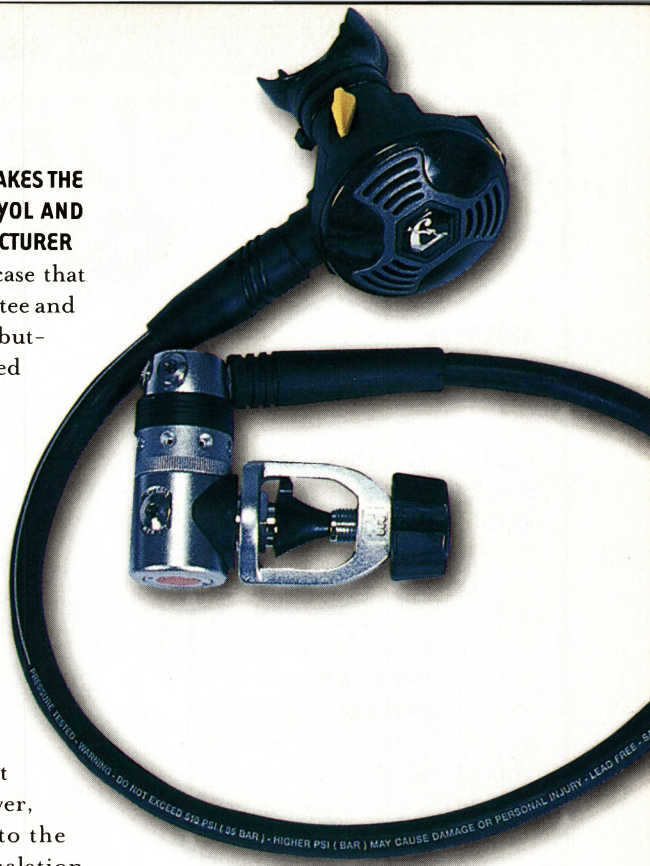
The key to the second stage's perfor-

mance seems to lie not in exotic technologies, but in engineering refinements that reduce friction on the travel lever, channel air flow efficiently to the Venturi assist and reduce exhalation effort.

If you are in the market for a reasonably priced, highly reliable and easy-

SUMMARY

The XSI is a well-engineered yet uncomplicated regulator that deserves its high-performance label. Suggested retail is \$294. For dealer and product information, call 800-338-9143 or visit www.cressi-sub.it.



breathing reg that will meet or exceed all sport-diving needs, have a look at the XSI. — Pierce Hoover

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JUST SURFACED

1 RIFFE METAL-TECH SPEARGUN

Riffe's new Metal-Tech provides mid-handle custom-gun performance at an attractive price. The aircraft-aluminum body is hard anodized for salt-water resistance and incorporates the proven trigger mechanism and locking pin safety used in other Riffe guns.

Designed to accommodate all shaft diameters, the Metal-Tech is fitted with a polyethylene shaft slider and a pair of vinyl silencers for extremely quiet shooting. The muzzle will accept four 9/16-inch or three 5/8-inch power bands and can be fitted with a Riffe Reel or configured for free shafting.

To learn more, call Riffe International at 949-361-2818.

3 TREASURE MAPS

Looking for a unique way to remember your favorite dive destination? How about an antique-style map from One Treasure Limited?

The company offers postcards, T-shirts and maps that feature tropical islands rendered in an old-world style using accurate, modern cartography. The maps are suitable for framing; some are even decorated with hand-painted marine scenes.

For a sample viewing, or to order a color catalog, go to www.onetreasurelimited.com or call 512-320-9161.

3 MITYLITE MAGNUM

Pelican's new MityLite Magnum is designed for divers who want a small, powerful light with an exceptionally wide beam. It features a pre-focused Xenon LaserSpot beam that is up to 600 percent brighter than conventional bulbs.

The light case is made of unbreakable chemical-resistant Xenoy resin and is submersible to a depth of 500 feet. Designed for two AA batteries, it weighs 3.5 ounces and carries Pelican's unconditional Lifetime Guarantee of Excellence.

Look for it at your favorite dive shop or call 800-473-5422. Web: www.pelican.com.

1

2

3

4

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4 OCEANIC'S DATAMAX PRO PLUS

Oceanic's new DataMax Pro Plus bridges the gap between simplicity and sophistication. While physically more compact and streamlined than previous models, it actually features larger numeric displays, including Oceanic's patented Graphic Diver Interface.

Unlike conventional computers, the Pro Plus allows the user to customize the display of the computer to meet individual needs. Out of the box, the computer is set to meet the needs of a new diver. Following simple steps, owners can configure the Pro Plus for the requirements of advanced diving, including custom-programmable nitrox capabilities.

The unit's upgraded memory stores up to 250 dives, downloads to a PC and performs a variety of predictive and in-water functions.

For more about this impressive new dive computer, visit your Oceanic dealer or call 510-562-0500. Web: www.oceanicusa.com.

5 HENDERSON GOLD CORE WETSUITS

Henderson's Gold Core wetsuits are made of a non-absorbent neoprene that significantly improves warmth and comfort. The company uses a proprietary technology that makes Gold Core wetsuits warmer, lighter in weight, easier to don, faster drying and more resistant to UV and bacteria.

The suits are available in a variety of styles, in thicknesses from 3 to 7mm. The Gold Core line also includes gloves, mitts, hoods and boots.

Visit your Henderson dealer or call 609-825-4771.



TURKS & CAICOS Islands

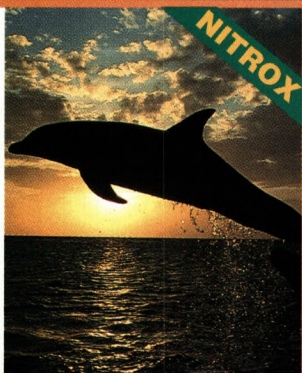
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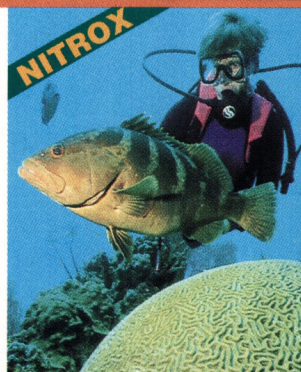
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The resort is set amid lush tropical gardens, across from famed Grace Bay Beach. 100 Junior Suites, complimentary continental breakfast daily, pool, pool bar. Adjacent to the Ports of Call Shopping Village with a variety of restaurants and shops.

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TOURING TURKS & CAICOS

THE 757 DROPPED TOWARD THE RUNWAY. OUTSIDE THE AIRPLANE WINDOW, PROVO REAL ESTATE SPED BY, A BLUR OF DESERT SCRUB AND DUST. IT COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN A VISION FROM THE FRONT SEAT

of a convertible racing through Arizona plains or a painted Bonaire landscape: rugged, wild, intemperate. Not quite what a tourist expects from an Atlantic Ocean island chain, though brochures describe this country as quite simply flat.

But what Provo — short for Providenciales — and the other Turks and Caicos islands lack in terrestrial scenery and greenery they more than make up for in turquoise water, vertical coral walls, marine animal encounters, funky hideaways, spectacular resorts and that getaway feeling reserved for small, tropical countries below the bikini belt.

A British Crown colony of eight inhabited islands and numerous cays, the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) lie about 30 miles southeast of the Bahamas and about 100 miles north of the Dominican Republic. Locals are quick to point out, especially in relationship to diving, that TCI is in the Atlantic Ocean. The Caribbean basin begins below the Dominican Republic.

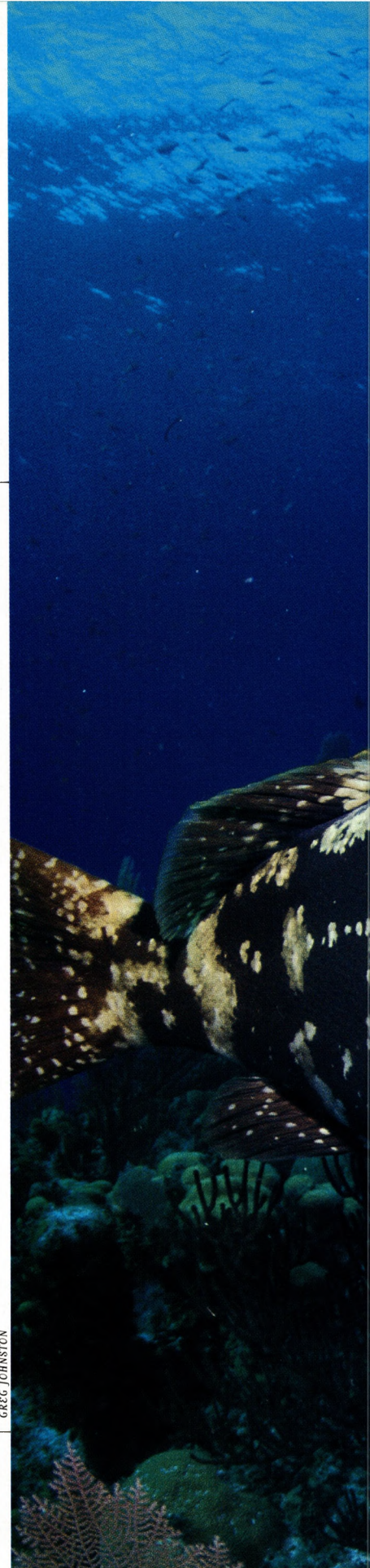
Winter storms that bring migrating humpback whales and often spectacular animal encounters also bring typical Atlantic swells and rough conditions to windward reefs. Once March passes, conditions begin to calm and divers still find eagle rays, turtles, sharks and some of the more spectacular wall dives in the region. Top that off with a kayak excursion, a trip to the Middle Caicos bat caves, a sailing cruise or a visit to the world's only conch farm and you just may have an adventure.

What the Turks and Caicos seem to have the most of is options. Whether you're a work-stressed parent whose spouse does not dive and whose kids need entertaining, a free spirit whose idea of adventure is staying in a breeze-cooled room at an 1830s guesthouse, or a diehard live-aboard connoisseur, TCI has your dive plan.

Following is a description of three of the four Turks and Caicos islands that offer diving diversity ranging from the spur-and-groove formations in Provo's Grace Bay to the remote *Endymion* wreck off Salt Cay. The fourth island, South Caicos, has had periodic dive service in the past. Recently, a new operation has opened called Ocean Haven, and preliminary reports have been favorable. See the list of dive operators on our Web site. Click on www.sportdivermag.com for updates on this new facility.

WALLS, WRECKS AND A FISH CALLED ALEXANDER

GREG JOHNSTON







UTSIDERS WHO HAVE LIVED IN THESE ISLANDS MOST OF THEIR LIVES — BRITISH AND AMERICAN EXPATRIATES MOSTLY — SAY TOURISM HAS YET TO REALLY HIT TURKS AND CAICOS. BUT ONE LOOK AT PROVO AND THAT

statement becomes premonitory. Provo already has its Allegro Resort, its Club Med and its Beaches resort. New construction on hotels and condominiums is bridging the 12-mile gap between Provo's nondescript "downtown" and the outer reaches of Leeward Marina and Northwest Point.

Provo is brightly colored pristine hotels and all-inclusive resorts, American-style dive vessels with creature comforts such as fresh melon and potable water, and cuisine ranging from Mama's special island recipes to buffet sushi or Mexican fajita night.

Still, there are no street signs in Provo. Directions are given historically: "Take a right where the old building supply used to be; left by the new Texaco."

Culturally, island people are a mix of African, Haitian, Dominican, Bermudian and Bahamian, brought centuries ago by slavers. Native Arawak populations were worked to extinction producing salt on Grand Turk, Salt Cay and South Caicos. The cultural mix, a lack of one true heritage and the influence of

expatriates — a few of whom have achieved resident status as "Belongers" — creates a cosmopolitan air. English is spoken, quite often the Queen's English.

Provo's seven dive operations are mostly scattered along the north coastline, where the majority of dive sites and resorts are located. Several also have boats docked on Provo's south side. One, Caicos Adventures, runs exclusively from the south shore to remote West Caicos and 16 miles out to a tiny runt of an island called French Cay, with a Hitchcockian bird colony and an almost private offshore wall.

The French Cay wall starts in about 50 feet of water and drops precipitously. "Everything grows bigger out here — the soft corals, the sponges, the fish ...," divemaster Steve said as a group of 10 divers prepared to descend on a day dappled with clouds.

True to his description, sprawling barrel sponges grew as big as cement mixers and rope sponges rose in tangles, as wild and impressive as Medusa's snakes. Visibility was about 70 feet with a slight mix of sediment

and sand in suspension. When conditions are ideal, divers tell of 100-plus-foot vis and shark sightings.

Many of the remaining operators also make the run to French Cay and to West Caicos, a sheer wall with undercut ledges, when the weather cooperates. However, northern sites such as Grace Bay and Northwest Point are closer and conditions tamer. All sites are fitted with mooring balls, and except for French Cay, which is a sanctuary, the reefs are part of the country's national park system. Operators are direct when reminding visitors not to take or touch.

Grace Bay features spur-and-groove hard coral formations that gradually deepen. Dive Provo makes the run in just 5-10 minutes from one of its three locations — a dock off the new Allegro Resort.

With few soft corals and a somewhat shy fish population, the area is suited for resort-course divers practicing first-time buoyancy skills. But like most dive sites near deep water, it offers seasoned divers the opportunity to see large animals such as eagle rays, turtles and a dolphin named Jo-Jo, a wild animal research subject who

True to his description, sprawling barrel sponges grew as big as cement mixers and rope sponges rose in tangles, wild and impressive as Medusa's snakes.

Skirting the north shore is a jagged barrier reef where tides rip through narrow passages.

PROVO

WHERE WE STAYED

ALLEGRO RESORT 877-SCUBA 4 U (877-728-2248) 800-858-2258

WEB: www.allegroresorts.com

OVERVIEW: Opened in February, this all-inclusive resort has 200 rooms with 200 more planned. The brightly painted, air-conditioned rooms are situated around a lagoon-like pool that overlooks the beach. One of Dive Provo's boats is located at the end of the main dock. Staff shuttled our gear in a wheelbarrow.

We found a wide selection of food at the buffet. Since everything was included, we ate like royalty. Drinks at the poolside bar — mango daquiris and piña coladas — were offered with rum floaters. Entertainment started after dark with a kids program on an outdoor stage; the later adult show is full of comedy, dance and song. Allegro also features a gym, kids club, tennis courts, kayaking and sailing.

RECOMMENDATION: Best for families, couples who want to get away and play in a lovely location, divers traveling with non-divers, and dive groups.

COST: \$195 to \$240 per person/night. Through December 22, the dive package includes 3 nights/4 dives for \$656 per person/double occupancy.

CARIBBEAN PARADISE INN 649-946-5020 **FAX:** 649-946-5022

E-MAIL: inn@paradise.tc **WEB:** www.paradise.tc

OVERVIEW: Owners Vern and Barbara did their research before opening this beautifully bright two-story, 16-room hotel with its sunset porches and tiled pool. Coffee, croissants and fruit made a fresh pre-dive breakfast under the canopied lanai. After diving, Vern set a rum punch and a piña colada poolside for a sunset drink. Restaurants for lunch and dinner are within walking distance.

Our air-conditioned room featured a large tiled shower and ample verandah. Dive lockers and a wash basin for dive gear were big pluses.

RECOMMENDATION: Divers looking for privacy and quiet. Good for couples, friends, singles, small groups.

COST: Rooms start at \$119/night. Weekly and specials rates (stay seven nights/pay for six until October) start at \$714 for a downstairs room.

FOR ADDITIONAL LISTINGS AND INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.SPORTDIVERMAG.COM



PROVO DIVING

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E-MAIL: ProvoTurtleDivers@provo.net | WEB: www.Provo.net/ptd/

OVERVIEW: Two 30-foot, one 41-foot dive vessel; instruction; rental; repair and retail; West Caicos adventure.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our vessel was well laid out; dry storage; camera table; rinse bucket. Soft drinks, water.

COST: Two-tank dive: \$70; group specials; package rates starting at \$283 per person for 3 nights/2 diving days.

BIG BLUE UNLIMITED Leeward Marina | 649-946-5034 | FAX: 649-946-5033

E-MAIL: bigblue@tciway.tc | WEB: www.bigblue.tc

OVERVIEW: Small group diving/26-foot catamaran; scooter safaris; nitrox; kayak eco-tours.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Vessel was well-equipped and comfortable. Melon, water, soft drinks. Afternoon kayak tour provided TCI education and chance to get away from crowds.

COST: Two-tank dive: \$90; packages available; kayak tours from \$45.

CAICOS ADVENTURES Turtle Cove Marina | 800-513-5822 | FAX/PHONE: 649-941-3346

E-MAIL: divucrzy@tciway.tc | WEB: www.caicosadventures.tc

OVERVIEW: Daily trips to West Caicos and, as weather permits, to French Cay. 36-foot dive boat; instruction.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bus pickup available. Lunch, water, soft drinks. Vessel equipped with a camera rinse bucket and dry storage.

COST: Two-tank dive, lunch: \$75; packages start at \$353.92 for 3 days/2 nights.

DIVE PROVO Ports of Call Shopping Center; Leeward Marina; Allegro Resort;

800-234-7768; 954-351-9771; 649-946-5040 | FAX: 954-351-9740

E-MAIL: diveprovo@gate.net | WEB: www.diveprovo.com

OVERVIEW: Daily two-tank dives to West Caicos, Northwest Point, Grace Bay, Pine Cay; scuba safaris (three tanks); specialty trips; photo, video, retail.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Camera rinse bucket, water provided; longer trips include lunch.

COST: Two-tank dive: \$70; 6-tank package: \$195.

FLAMINGO DIVERS Erebus Inn | 800-204-9282 | FAX: 649-946-4193

E-MAIL: flamingo@Provo.net | WEB: www.Provo.net/flamingo/

OVERVIEW: Small groups, snacks, hotel pickup, instruction.

J & B TOURS Leeward Marina | 649-946-5047 | FAX: 649-946-5288

E-MAIL: jill@jbtours.com | WEB: www.jbtours.com

SILVER DEEP Leeward Marina; 649-946-5612 | FAX: 649-946-4527

E-MAIL: silverdeep_dean@tciway.tc | WEB: www.silverdeep.com

PETER HUGHES DIVING 800-9-DANCER | FAX: 305-669-9475 | E-MAIL: dancer@peter-

hughes.com | WEB: www.peterhughes.com

OVERVIEW: 7-night trips. *Sea Dancer* is a 110-foot vessel carrying 18 passengers.

COST: \$1,095 to \$1,495, plus \$45 port charge.

TURKS & CAICOS AGGRESSOR Turtle Cove Marina, Provo | 800-348-2628 | FAX: 504-384-0817

E-MAIL: aggressor@Provo.net | WEB: www.Provo.net/Aggressor/

OVERVIEW: 100-foot live-aboard; 16 passengers.

COST: \$1,595 for 7 nights/6 days.

TAO CHARTERS LTD. 649-941-6767 | E-MAIL: tao@Provo.net | WEB: www.Provo.net/Tao/

OVERVIEW: Overnight trips aboard large trimaran.

FOR ADDITIONAL LISTINGS AND INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.SPORTDIVERMAG.COM

occasionally appears to thrill the visitors.

Visibility can be blue and beautiful unless the tide is running out and sand from the broad southern bank dusts the water column.

Skirting the north shore is a jagged barrier reef where breakers crash and tides rip through narrow passages. Whether aboard Big Blue Unlimited's 26-foot catamaran powerboat with a handful of people or in a group aboard the 41-foot Newton operated by Art Pickering's Provo Turtle Divers, swells approaching the reef are impressive. Bermudian wreckers once sat in the low steppes at the west end of the island watching for errant ships to crash against the coral, as Big Blue's Tom Atkins tells it.

Northwest Point is a spit of land jutting toward the reef. Cresting the point and cruising south along Provo's far west shore, divers come to a wall. In some places, the wall drops vertically to unseen depths. In other places, the reef steps down from 40 feet to 120 feet and down eventually to the 6,000-foot-deep Caicos passage. Soft corals have found purchase, and on one visit, barrel sponges were spawning profusely, pouring out white, grainy offspring that blanketed the reef in fog. A blacktip shark cruised calmly at depth.

During surface intervals, vessels anchor off Malcolm's Road Beach, a sugar-sand stretch framed by faltering Tiki huts, once the land-based site of a strange French underwater television show.

According to various reports, the French show featured an underwater dome, now nicknamed Thunderdome, where topless mermaids breathed compressed air from hoses. Free divers would plunge from the surface down 30 feet, swim inside the dome, locate "pearls" in the sand and present them to the mermaids for a breath of air. Many of the freedivers forgot to exhale as they surfaced, and lung injuries canceled the show.

Provo's operators usually offer two-tank morning dives for \$70-\$90. Afternoon and night dives can be arranged. On a recent visit, thimble jellyfish were thick in the top 10 feet of water off Northwest Point. Jellyfish often migrate during spring. Intact, the animals seem less inclined to sting. Chop them up with a boat prop and you may get multiple hits. A skin suit or wetsuit is recommended; water temperatures hovered around 79 in early May.

DIVE TRAVEL PLANNER

TURKS & CAICOS ISLANDS

The Turks and Caicos Islands apparently got their name from the Turks Head cactus and the word "cay" — an Arawak Indian word for the many nearby sand banks. Cay became the Spanish word "cayos," which locals pronounced Caicos. The Turks Head cactus resembles the Turkish fez hat and grows on the islands.

The Turks islands (Grand Turk and Salt Cay) are separated from the Caicos islands (Providenciales, which used to be Provident Caicos; West, North, Middle, East and South Caicos) by the 7,000-foot-deep, 22-mile-wide Turks Island Passage. The weathered limestone islands cover 193 square miles.

BETWEEN ISLANDS

We flew InterIsland Air. The twin-engine planes were small but comfortable and had ample baggage space, even for our dive gear. Service was personal, so we were able to ask the pilot if we could fly low since we were doing multiple dives pushing the 24-hour limit. After he asked the permission of the other passengers, he agreed. We were treated to a fun flying experience, skimming the bank between Grand Turk and Salt Cay. Other carriers such as Sky King, Global Air and Turks & Caicos Airways also fly between the islands. Schedules are somewhat flexible, so be forewarned: Plan plenty of time for connections, if needed.

DIVE LOG

During the winter — January through March — humpback whales migrate past the Turks and Caicos Islands to the Mouchoir and Silver Banks just to the south. Most operators run trips to watch and even snorkel with the whales, depending on their activity. Operators say many of the female whales bring their young calves. The weather and winds can be unpredictable, so be aware that the diving could be, also.

Once April arrives, the weather begins to calm through the summer months. During our week of diving in May, we found little current and 80-degree water with 70-100 feet of visibility. Dives were leisurely and guides were patient.

The weather heats up through the summer, and by September, it's hot enough for the dive operators to take vacations.

In general, we found most of the operators efficient and friendly — a necessity in such a service-related industry. Most



CHRISTINE DUMMIT

A divemaster and stingray have a close encounter during a feeding experience at Gibbs' Cay near Grand Turk.

provided the essentials, including two-tank boat dives with tanks and weights, night and afternoon single-tank dives,

gear and camera rental.

Larger-vessel operators had extra room, thus extra gear such as O₂ bottles, spare regulators and weights to dangle for surfacing divers. Camera rinse buckets and coolers of soft drinks and water were provided.

Aboard smaller vessels, your dive gear was usually handled through setup. Such operators often provided water and candy, plus some emergency gear.

Because the average run to a site was much shorter for these vessels, extraneous supplies were not necessary or wise based on

weight limits. Other safety factors: Many shops offer nitrox fills; Provo has a recompression chamber.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Most divers I met were skilled people who had concern for the reefs. However, at least one group of three I encountered did not. The instant they got to the reef, one decided to take a photo of the others. The diver swam/bicycled backwards and slammed into a large star coral head. The diver saw the coral, stood on it, and shot the photo. I talked with the divemaster who politely admonished the diver back on board. Moral: We can't take for granted that anyone has taught divers to protect reefs or the consequences such impacts cause. Don't let such actions go unnoticed. If the divemaster won't respond, you must.



BRENDA WEAVER

GETTING THERE

Getting to TCI: Most tourists fly into Provo on daily American Airlines flights from Miami. However, BahamasAir has started twice-weekly flights from Miami to Grand Turk, and Lynx Air flies from Fort Lauderdale to Provo and Grand Turk.

RESORT/DIVE INFORMATION

For more information on resorts, dive sites and dive operators in Provo, Grand Turk, Salt Cay and South Caicos and links to accommodations in the Turks & Caicos for divers, please visit our Web site at www.sportdiver.com.

As Sea Eye Diving's Cecil Ingham put it: "All the dive sites here are good."

GRAND TURK

OFFICIAL LITERATURE RUMORS THAT COLUMBUS MAY HAVE MADE HIS FIRST NEW WORLD LANDING ON GRAND TURK RATHER THAN SAN SALVADOR. BUT DON'T BEGIN THAT CONVERSATION IN A BAR.  BRIAN RIGGS, MANAGER OF THE

Turks and Caicos National Museum on Grand Turk, began to explain over beers at Salt Raker Inn that there's just no archaeological research supporting such a claim. An islander at the other end of the bar took offense. Riggs soothed the man's feathers and deferred the conversation until a museum tour could be arranged.

Grand Turk is the capital of TCI, and its museum is one of the centerpieces along a quaint and colorful waterfront that features places such as Salt Raker; the Turks Head Hotel, with its British pub; and the three dive operators — Oasis Divers, Sea Eye Diving and Blue Water Divers. All carry tourists 300 yards offshore to the often majestic, never disappointing, Grand Turk wall.

In contrast to Provo's bustle, Grand Turk is sleepy. At night, guests walk the one-way paved road that runs along the west shore, ambling from a dinner special to an island party or to one of two weekly appearances by guitarist/singer Mitch Rolling, who also operates Blue Water Divers.

Donkeys and horses roam the remaining roads on this 7-mile-long strip. Boys ride the animals for spe-

cial events, then release them again to graze.

Though the endless calm could become intoxicating, it is Grand Turk's wall diving that is addictive. At Amphitheater, a shimmering white bed of sand slopes to a natural keyhole cut in the wall. Through the breach is water as blue and rich as velvet and a soft coral garden of reds, yellows and greens.

At Black Forest, shrub-size black corals grow from a vertical bed of red sponges. On top of the wall, peacock flounders hunt in the sand and garden eels capture floating tidbits. Swarms of juvenile fish and cleaner fish hover over coral heads, dodging and darting as divers swim past.

As Sea Eye Diving's Cecil Ingham and Connie Rus put it — and it's really not hype — "All the dive sites here are good."

Some are even surprising.

A group of six divers discovered that this spring as they suited up aboard one of Oasis' 24-foot Carolina skiffs, a standard dive vessel for Grand Turk because of the close proximity of dive sites. Divemaster Paul hinted that he would be conducting certain "activities" along the wall.

The group rolled off the gunwales and met near the sheer drop. Rushing from the depths, a Nassau grouper beelined it for Paul. It turns out the grouper, nicknamed Alexander, has been trained since 1991. Paul held Alexander's face to his, kissed it, stroked the grouper's mouth and head and blew him bubbles. As Paul swam toward the wall, Alexander raced to every diver, then back to Paul.

Eventually, Paul signaled Alexander with his hand that it was time to eat. Quickly, Paul fed the animal before any other fish could circle. A second fish, a smaller grouper named Arthur, briefly joined the "activities," though it was clear Alexander was the star.

Dive operators conduct a similar feeding experience on the flats of deserted Gibbs Cay, a 20-minute run. This time, the cast includes southern stingrays, eagle rays and a moray eel. The trips often include snorkeling shallow reefs with vibrant elkhorn coral, a free-diving experience to catch conch, and a meal under canopy next to the island's infamous shimmering turquoise flats.

As the skiff approaches the Gibbs Cay shore, the dark shapes of rays float

WHERE WE STAYED/DIVED

ISLAND HOUSE 649-946-1519 | FAX: 649-946-2646

E-MAIL: ishouse@tcway.tc | **WEB:** www.islandhouse-tci.com

OVERVIEW: This Mediterranean-style house with eight private suites, including kitchens, off a lush, tropical courtyard overlooks North Creek Bay.

RECOMMENDATION: Couples; also good for dive buddies, families.

COST: Start at \$159 for two-night/one-dive-day rate package.

TURKS HEAD HOTEL 649-946-2466 | FAX: 649-946-1716

E-MAIL: tophotel@grand-turk.com or turkshead@grand-turk.com

WEB: www.grand-turk.com

OVERVIEW: This eight-room inn with wooden bar, high ceilings, shades of pastel mint and pink was an 1840 mansion.

RECOMMENDATION: Couples, dive buddies, small groups.

COST: Two-night/one-dive-day packages start at \$159; meal plans available.

BLUE WATER DIVERS 649-946-1226 | **E-MAIL:** mrolling@tcway.tc

WEB: www.microplan.com/bluerake.htm

OASIS DIVERS 800-892-3995; 649-946-1128 | **E-MAIL:** oasisdiv@tcway.tc

WEB: www.oasisdivers.com

SEA EYE DIVING 649-946-1407 | **E-MAIL:** ci@tcway.tc

WEB: www.reefnet.on.ca/grandturk

PETER HUGHES DIVING 800-9-DANCER | FAX: 305-669-9475

E-MAIL: dancer@peterhughes.com | **WEB:** www.peterhughes.com

FOR ADDITIONAL LISTINGS AND INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.SPORTDIVERMAG.COM

ghostlike over the sand. In just 4 feet of water and with only snorkel gear, visitors watch rays as they pass through the group, stop to inspect hands, bump into shoulders and legs and continue in a hovering pattern.

Ten, 15 or more rays join the swarm. Paul feeds them

"sprints," what the islanders call a local baitfish. When the food is gone, a quick snorkel over adjacent grass beds and a slow warm-up in the flaming heat of a tropic sun complete the experience.

Though the peace and quiet could become intoxicating, it's Grand Turk's wall diving that is addictive. Black corals sprout from beds of red sponges; sea fans form an intricate web of lace.



BRYAN SHEEDY BREWED A POT OF FRESHLY GROUND KENYAN COFFEE FOR GUESTS ARRIVING ON THE 6 A.M. GRAND TURK FLIGHT AND FOR THE HANDFUL OF STRAGGLERS LEFT OVER FROM THE WEEKEND'S SALT CAY DAYS FESTIVAL. THOSE ISLANDERS

had slept in hammocks amid the gaggle of chickens, donkeys and horses that wander the hard-scrabble yard of Sheedy's Mt. Pleasant Guest House.

For divers who have already sampled Provo and Grand Turk, tiny Salt Cay is truly an outpost. It is quite possible to feel immediately native, since crowds are nonexistent and the 80 residents (62 adults, 18 kids) are more than eager to make friends. Roads are all dirt and limestone, and golf carts are a common tourist transport.

The island gets its name from the extensive shallow salt ponds that produced arguably the world's best salt for almost 300 years. Grand Turk and South Caicos have similar ponds, but they're not as dominant as those on 2.5-square-mile Salt Cay.

As Sheedy likes to put it: "When George Washington was using Salt Cay salt at Valley Forge, they had already been raking it here for 100 years."

Diving from Salt Cay is quite diverse and quite solitary. The one operator, Salt Cay Divers, runs several skiffs to moored sites along a precipitous wall. Even shallow reefs above the wall are lush with healthy coral, both soft and hard varieties. On one particular dive, our group slipped over the edge of the wall to meet a school of neon-blue chromis poised against a deeper

blue background. Parrotfish of all varieties and ages gnawed on plentiful coral polyps, and a nurse shark found comfort in a shallow cavern on the reef's slope.

Co-owner/operator Debbie Manos also runs trips to Grand Turk's wall, to Gibbs Cay and to a now world-renowned wreck called the *Endymion*. The *Endymion*, a

Our group slipped over the wall to meet a school of neon-blue chromis against the deep blue.

CHRIS A. CRUMLEY

SALT CAY

WHERE WE STAYED/DIVED

MT. PLEASANT GUEST HOUSE PHONE/FAX: 649-946-6927

OVERVIEW: Tiny Salt Cay is so funky and personable, you'll feel like you've come to the home of a friend when you walk up to Bryan Sheedy's porch. Chances are someone will be sitting at the gazebo-style bar at the end of the long verandah. Sheedy will take time to tell you the local lore and maybe point out a few rare birds or the hummingbird that makes its nest in a backyard tree.

You can choose a room in the main house—a breeze-cooled 1830s salt merchant's house—or head to the nearby "annex," a house down the road that offers air-conditioned accommodations. Our room was upstairs in the main house. Its pitched roof and flow-through ventilation seemed to keep things cool enough during our May trip.

RECOMMENDATION: For adventurous couples, small groups or buddies.

COST: Day rates are \$65 per night for one person, \$75 for two (double occupancy) and \$30/day for food. Packages available.

SALT CAY DIVERS 649-946-6906 | FAX: 649-946-6940

E-MAIL: scdivers@tcway.tc | WEB: www.saltcaydivers.tc

OVERVIEW: Two-tank morning trips, afternoon trips, night dives; trips to Grand Turk's wall, *Endymion* wreck, Great Sand Cay and Gibbs Cay. Nitrox is available.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The day we dived, the weather was too rough (2-foot seas) for any of the Grand Turk vessels to cross, and there were no live-aboards or private boaters nearby. We were one boat with a small group. The dive was peaceful and the reef and wall were healthy.

COST: Two-tank dive, \$60; Gibbs Cay/Great Sand Cay trips, \$40 includes lunch.

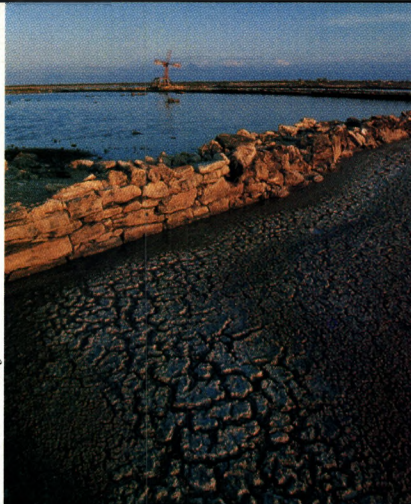
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British warship, sank in 1790 in 40 feet of water. The wreck still features intact cannons and relics because it is protected by the TCI government. Divers say the reef around the *Endymion* makes it an all-inclusive site, though calm weather is needed to make the 16-mile trip.

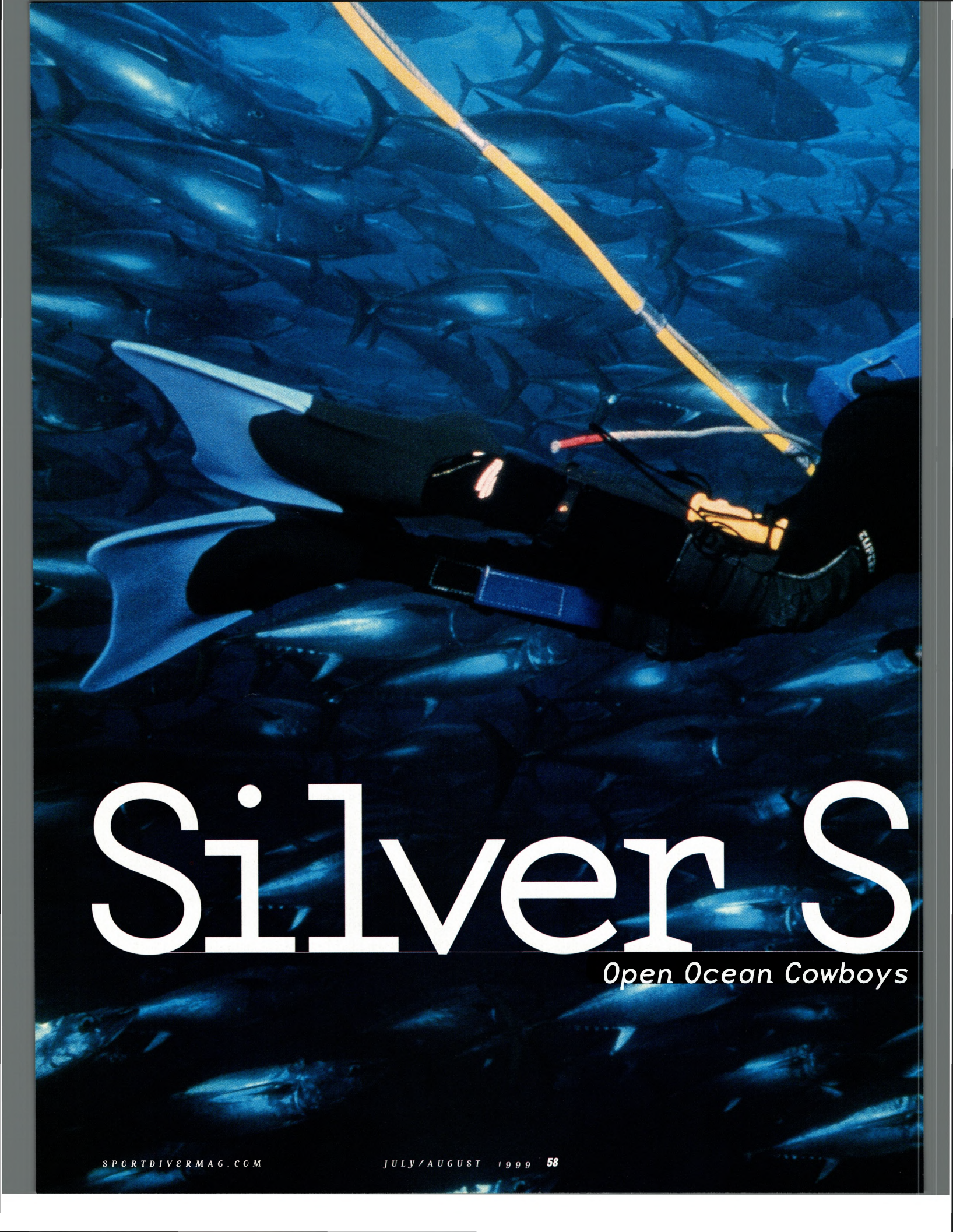
Manos also takes visitors to Great Sand Cay, where they stop for lunch, hike the island and sometimes camp. In coming weeks, Manos said she was taking a couple to the island for their honeymoon night — their first night together — with a bottle of champagne, moonlight and a deserted island. She couldn't script it better. 

CHRIS A. CRUMLEY



*At left: Salt Cay is known for its shallow salt ponds that produced salt for almost 300 years. Below, the anchor of the *Endymion*, a British warship that sank here in 1790 in 40 feet of water. The *Endymion* is considered among the world's best wreck dives.*





Silver S

Open Ocean Cowboys



stream

Ride Shotgun for a Precious Herd: Bluefin Tuna

Matthew Christian drops into the blue ocean and descends to a depth of 60 feet. John Brendel and I hover near the surface, suspended 2,000 fathoms above the sea floor and surrounded by a slow-swimming school of southern bluefin tuna.

Without warning, something triggers the fish into flight. Their movement creates a pressure wave that is both heard and felt, as if a gale-force wind were buffeting our bodies. The sound increases to a roar, and the pressure pushes us downward. Visibility drops to nothing, and exhaust bubbles no longer rise; instead, they swirl around our heads. Breathing becomes difficult.

Above us, the tuna begin to race. The behavior spreads, and soon hundreds of fish are circling at speeds too fast for the human eye to follow. This 20-foot-high, 15-foot-wide silver stream of living mercury forms itself into cylindrical vortex, and we are in the center.

It is a disorienting experience and a dramatic contrast to the normal quiet of the school. Then, just as quickly as it started, the race is over. The speeding tuna slam on the brakes, dive, and then resume their slow, circular pattern. The ocean is once again a blue cathedral, a place of quiet and calm.

While Matt returns to the task of repairing the huge net that encircles and contains the tuna school, John begins to check the fish for signs of stress. It's business as usual for the divers who tend this giant floating tuna cage.

Story & Photos by Paul Sutherland

We are 250 miles south of Australia, submerged in a circular net bowl that is 120 feet in diameter and 60 feet deep. Inside this net enclosure, known as a cage, are some 5,000 extremely valuable bluefin tuna. Captured by a purse seine boat, then transferred to the cage, these fish are being moved toward Port Lincoln, home port of the Australian tuna fleet.

A converted tuna boat tows the cage toward shore at a swimmer's pace of 2 mph. A decade ago, these same fish would have made the ride to port in a freezer hold. Today, once in the cage, the fish are protected, coddled and fed. At the quiet waters near Port Lincoln, they will be transferred to a farm pen where they will be fed and fattened, then harvested and sent to market.

Worth hundreds of times what they



Hanging from a wing, the cage



Captured by purse seine, more than 5,000 southern bluefin tuna swim in a cage until they can be brought back to shallow water, fed, fattened and sold on the sashimi market. The enclosure measures 120 feet in diameter and drops 60 feet deep. Keeping the fish alive takes constant maintenance from specially trained commercial divers.

would bring in a can, these fish are destined for Japan's hallowed sashimi market, the most lucrative fishery business in the world. At current prices, the fish in the cage are worth approximately \$2.5 million.

During the three-week period it takes to tow the cage to the "farm" in protected waters, the fishing company's front line of defense for protecting its valuable piscine investment is the group of commercial divers on board the tow vessel. Every morning, a team of two divers and a dive supervisor climb into their 21-foot aluminum dive tender and motor out to the cage behind the vessel.

Hanging from a round flotation ring, like some kind of giant's water wing, the cage is always approached from the rear. As the divers follow the

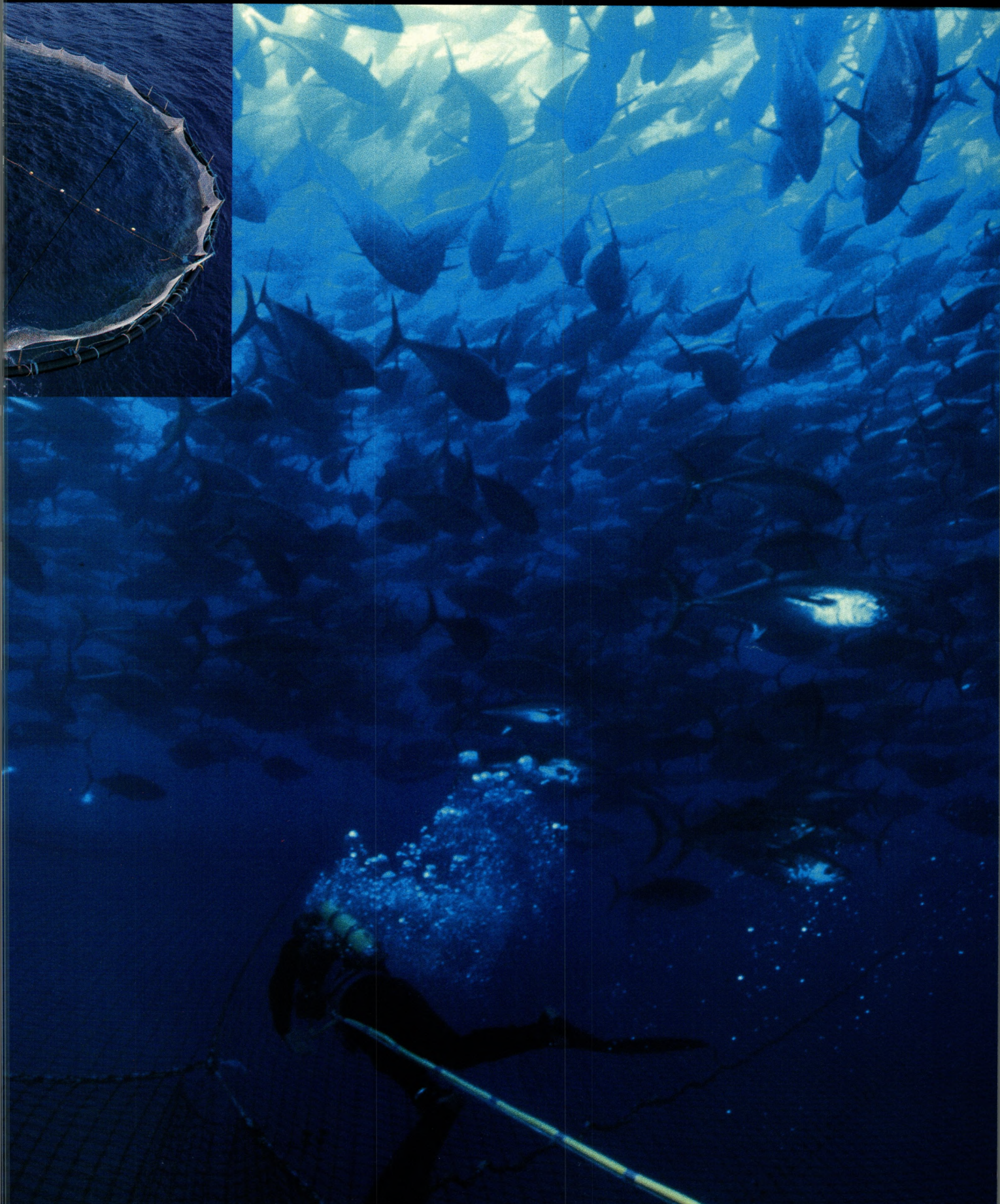
cage and ready their gear, the tow vessel continues to forge ahead. It stops only when the divers submerge.

Approaching from the rear also places the dive tender into calm water in the slipstream of the moving cage. From this vantage point, the divers peer down the outside of the cage, checking for large pelagic predators that might have taken an interest in the mass aggregation of tuna behind it that are contained by nothing more than a 1/8-inch mesh barrier.

While the presence of a shark outside the net wouldn't in itself call the dive to a halt, one diver said, smirking, "It's nice to know what you're going to meet when you drop in."

The luxury, though, of seeing 100 feet in any direction under the surface

flotation ring, like some giant's water
is approached from the rear.



is not available when the tow moves inshore, where the visibility may drop to 25 feet, then even lower once in the farm area at Port Lincoln.

Once in the cage, the divers set to work inspecting the fish for signs of stress and the net for holes. During a 45-minute dive, they will deal with any predators that may be either trapped in the mesh or inside the cage, repair any conspicuous holes and retrieve the rare dead tuna.

The divers remain wary of the bottom and the trailing edge of the cage. When a large predator becomes interested in the cage and its contents, it usually appears below or "out the back," swimming up the scent line of the fish.

The divers say the cage does attract sharks, mostly mako and blue sharks, which are drawn by the activity or are following the tuna schools looking for an easy meal. When sharks are around, the divers work a little more slowly, paying a bit more attention to the water around them.

Once the cage is assembled offshore, the divers rarely venture outside its mesh walls, preferring safety in numbers. They say that a large bait ball is better than no bait ball, provided you are in the middle of it.

Matt and John have dived tuna cages for the past four years, which translates into a lot of time underwater and a lot of time at sea. You can hear it in their voices as they talk about hard work in rough seas, assembling cages or trying to work while surrounded by curious, pestering sharks.

Both in their 20s, they already talk about spending more time at home and about getting out of the tuna business and off the water. Inevitably, though, conversation veers away from family, surfing, fishing and camping, back to the present — tuna and the role of commercial divers in the tuna farming industry.

Even after four years spent with these fish, Matt and John maintain that diving the huge mesh fishbowl is always a thrill. They talk about the beauty and speed of the tuna. In the cage, they are surrounded by one of the fastest bony fishes in the ocean. When these fish accelerate, which they may do at any given moment, the experience can be

overwhelming.

And then there are the sharks.

Most divers take the infrequent presence of these apex predators in stride, knowing the sharks are, for the most part, curious. Even while feeding, they are interested primarily in the tuna. Matt relates an electrifying experience that helps explain why these divers are all business when in the cages: Get in, do the job, and get out.

He was repairing a small hole at the back of the net and rough seas forced him to kneel to remain in place. Generally a cautious diver, he had just scanned the blue water outside the cage for activity when he felt more than saw a large body moving toward him, parallel and very close to the cage. Looking to his right through the cage wall not 3 feet from him, stock-still in the water and staring intently at him, was a very large white shark.

Matt said it was a second before he realized that he had been ambushed. The game had been played, and he had for all purposes lost. It took considerable energy not to race to the surface.

Without taking his eyes off the shark, he backed slowly away from the mesh wall and surfaced as fast as safely possible, putting tuna between him and the shark. The shark turned back out into the blue shortly after Matt retreated and wasn't seen again for several more days. Both Matt and John entered the cage a bit more slowly for several days after the incident.

In hindsight, Matt reckons the shark was only curious. In fact, he says, the greatest danger to divers is not the wildlife but the vicious offshore weather, which can pound the divers as they work in and around the cages.

He had just seen when he felt a



By any standard, the tuna divers work hard for their salaries, earning some US\$30,000. In the unregulated first year of the industry, divers reported 27 cases of bends. As a result, industry standards and practices were established. All divers must now complete a stringent, government-regulated commercial diving course.

Although the work carries stigmas of danger and elitism, most of the divers who work the tuna cages display an air of calm, professional nonchalance. They operate by a simple motto: Know your limits, work within them and remain focused on the task at hand. Bad weather, deep water and sharks are all just facts of life to be considered, adjusted for and overcome.

It is not a job for the timid. But for those willing to accept the challenges of riding herd on 400 tons of tuna, diving the cage is the experience of a lifetime. ■



anned the blue water outside the cage
large body moving toward him.



The tuna cage is pulled behind the tow vessel for three weeks, before the crew reaches its home port. During that time, commercial divers mend the mesh barriers, remove predators from the cage and collect any fish that die from the school. Though sharks might seem a constant menace in waters more than 2,000 fathoms deep, it's the rough weather conditions the divers dread most.



BRANDON D. COLE

Going With the Flow

In British
Columbia,
Drift Diving Is
Not for the
Timid

The dive sounded tempting - and possibly dangerous. "We're talking speeds of 20 knots or better. Guinness calls it the fastest navigable tidal current in the world," Mike Lever said over the phone. Hmm ... I told Mike I'd think about it.

Curiosity overcame caution, and a few months later I found myself off British Columbia's Vancouver Island in the salon of Lever's live-aboard boat, the *Nautilus VII*, getting to know my fellow passengers — or at least their dive prowess.

Mike gave us a refresher on diving with currents: "Don't fight it. Most currents you'll hit on slack are highly localized back eddies."

The least experienced of the group had made only 80 dives, but all within the past year and all in the Northwest, which surely counts for double that number anywhere else. Two guys were poised to notch their 1,000th dive. That's logged dives. God knows how many they forgot in between. Everyone in the group knew one another, leaving me as the odd person out.

Al Bennet, a construction worker, and his nurse girlfriend Donna Rosenthal invited me to be their dive buddy. Donna sported a brace holding up a barely healed broken ankle but was determined to dive. And she did, thanks to a team effort with gear by Al, Mike and assorted other folk. Northwest divers are not only hardy, they're stubborn.

by Yvette Cardozo



We were heading north along Vancouver Island, aiming for an area on the mainland called Nakwakto opposite the northern tip of the island.

The British Columbia coast is sliced with long, narrow fingers of water called inlets, many of them 50 miles long and hardly a quarter-mile wide. Nakwakto is near the head of one such inlet named Seymour. Tides here vary sometimes by 19 feet, meaning a chunk of water 19 feet high and, in the case of Seymour, 43 miles long drains through a pass so narrow you could hit a baseball across it.

Currents have been recorded at 22 knots. When water rushes between the occasional set of islands here, it actually becomes a waterfall. Yes, indeed, this was going to be interesting. But first, we had to get to Nakwakto, and that meant motoring up the 240-mile length of Vancouver Island. To break things up, we planned to dive our way along the coastline.

Our first dive was halfway up the island at April Point Wall off Campbell River.

"The current here is 13 knots. Think of this as a training run," Mike said at our dive briefing. Most live-aboards do some tame novice thing for the break-in dive. Well, then again, April Point Wall was sort of a novice thing for the Northwest. We'd have the luxury of an anchor descent, and we'd be doing most of the dive on slack tide.

Mike gave us a refresher on diving

with currents: "Don't fight it. Most currents you'll hit on slack are highly localized back eddies. Let yourself go with the flow. Odds are you'll go 50 or 100 feet, hit another current and get blown the other way."

Don't forget the downwellings and upwellings. Again, they tend to be highly localized. Whatever you do, he added, don't hit your BC inflator. If you push your way horizontally maybe 30 feet, you'll probably come out of it, at which point you don't want to rocket to the surface with an over-inflated BC.

Finally, there was the matter of moving on the surface.

"Lie on your back and lock your knees and fin with straight legs. No bicycle peddling," Mike said. At Nakwakto, you'll have to be able to go at least 50 feet against current. And heads up around the skiff. Make eye contact with the crew so you know they've spotted you.

"I'm not trying to create a mood of tension, but at Nakwakto we need to be on top of things," Mike added unnecessarily.

So we powdered and jellied our way into our drysuits and hit the water. Fifty-one degrees. We sank to 80 feet and immediately found what makes this area famous. Strawberry anemones stretched in a pulsing, neon-pink blanket as far as we could see. It was

Many divers visiting Northwestern waters for the first time don't realize the bright colors they'll see. At right, a strawberry anemone waits to feed.

BRANDON D. COLE



MIKE DAY

broken only by the occasional stalk of white plumose.

Whoops, the current arrived a bit ahead of schedule. Our dive turned into a sweep as we were pushed along the wall at breakneck speed. Frankly, the only way to stay with your buddy at times like this is to hold his hand. But everybody comes up at more or less the same place, so in the end, we were all still together.

Our next dive, Row and Be Damned, was more vertical wall with more strawberries. But at 80 feet, Al's light went crazy. Even close up, peering from a distance of hardly 3 feet, it was almost impossible to tell what we were looking at — until the beige, bul-

and every inch sprouted tiny tentacles that fed in the green, gritty soup that surrounded us.

In the shallows, the carpet was cut by tangled balls of yellow and purple basket stars, 20-armed sun stars, red urchins and nudibranch eggs like strings of pearls. It was all woven into an incredibly intricate living tapestry.

At depth, it looked like a New England twilight in a blizzard, a kind of filmy gray-white that required 30-watt lights to pierce. I've seen night dives in the Caribbean that were brighter than this dive at high noon in Canada.

At 70 feet, a basketball-size octopus splayed out across a rock, flowing gracefully in several directions at once

waterfall just before the bottom drops out.

And between two close-set islands, the bottom did drop out. Here, in the middle of a coastal inlet, was a full-fledged, 10-foot-high waterfall. This was our welcome to Nakwakto.

"We're going to snorkel that tomorrow," Mike casually grinned.

Later, at the briefing, Mike drew a diagram on the board of Tremble Island surrounded by a bewildering hatchwork of lines representing the currents. There was the main flow going north to south, the back eddies going in the opposite direction and more back eddies to that.

The dive was to be timed to the sec-



bous wall moved.

A half-dozen sets of antennas waved. It was a jumble of huge king crabs. I had counted up to eight when the outcrop of rock I was using to steady myself moved. I was holding onto a crab, with another one at my knee. By the time we were done counting feelers and dividing by two, we came up with 11 crabs in a crack maybe 4 feet long. They were crammed inside, piled atop one another like so many marbles.

The next day we hit Hussar Point along the fabled Browning Wall. Browning is one of those spots Jacques Cousteau drooled over. It's considered the best diving in this area and, despite 47-degree water and 30-foot visibility, it didn't disappoint us.

The living carpet started virtually at the surface ... hairy, waving and white as far as the eye could see. Plumose and encrusting sponges spread unbroken,

and blinking at us with its slit-shaped eyes. In another crevice, a baby wolf eel peered out, looking like the world's ugliest Cabbage Patch doll.

The further north we traveled, the nastier the weather got. There's a climate line halfway up Vancouver Island that seems to divide the more temperate south from its sometimes evil northern twin. We dithered about while a 60-knot gale played tag, then we made a dash for the protected waters of Seymour Inlet.

Seymour's current awaited. We motored over in the skiff to check out an island locals call Tremble (because when the current is on the move, the land actually shakes). The plan had been to land and nail up a sign with our boat's name.

The skiff glided along deceptively flat, oily water. It looked like that glassy bulge that builds up at the head of a

At left: Gooseneck barnacles grow in clumps as big as basketballs. Above: A plumose cluster blooms in the Emerald Sea. At right: A wolf eel leaves its hole to inspect a gear-laden, cold-water diver.

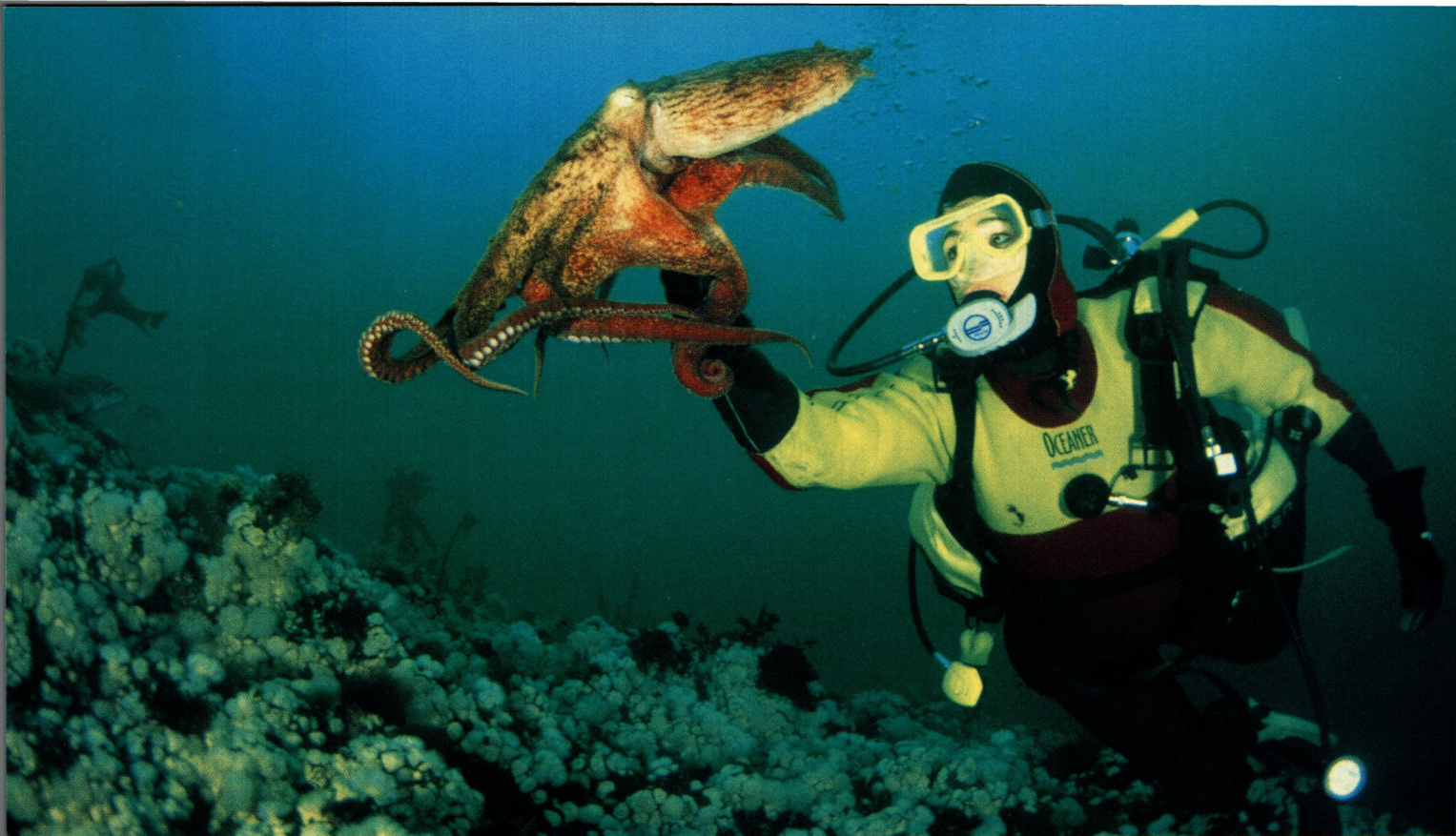
ond, and here, as nowhere else, we had to keep the schedule tight. So tight, Mike called out dive time limits to each departing wave of divers. Twenty-four minutes for the first group, then 22, then 20 for the last people off the boat.

The plan was to make our way down the topography to 60 or 70 feet, then work our way around the island, hopefully emerging just offshore on the opposite side. It was important — vitally important — that we keep close to the bottom.

Needless to say, our first attempt at Nakwakto was strictly Keystone Kops. Those hapless folk who rose even 5 feet off the topography (yours truly included) were swept out into the chan-

LEFT: JYVETTE CARDOZO CENTER: MIKE DAY RIGHT: BRANDON D. COLE





Besides sporting a wealth of colorful invertebrates, dive sites along Vancouver Island also thrill divers with larger animal encounters. This Pacific octopus seems to have little to fear from divers.

nel just as a tug came by, dragging several tons of scrap wood.

The next day went far better. As before, we tied up to a branch hanging from a tree on Tremble Island. Everyone rolled in and finned back to the shore rocks, then sank into the kelp and made their way down the island's slope.

Kelp gave way to hairy rock that soon became covered with feather-duster tube worms. But these weren't your usual delicate, wispy things. They were compact pompons colored a rich, blood-red cranberry and striped with shining teal.

What makes this spot famous, however, is the gooseneck barnacles. Most goosenecks are muddy brown and grow in tidal flats. Here, they go down to 50 feet and more.

The barnacles grew in clumps, some fist-sized; others as big as basketballs. Each barnacle stood 3 inches tall, a mosaic of fluorescent copper framing plates of mother-of-pearl. This is the only place Mike knows of where the goosenecks come in this particular set of intense colors.

The barnacle clumps got larger, until they joined into entire ridges of the stuff. Then even the ridges joined,

and the bed of iridescent barnacles stretched as far as we could see.

A current caught me and I reached for a bare rock. Well, the rock blinked. It was a red Irish lord maybe 10 inches long and plastered on the barnacles like it was glued. It didn't move even when Al flashed two pictures of it.

Because of time and distance constraints, we had to keep moving. But in those few moments we stopped, we could see that the bottom was entirely covered with life. Lines of feather dusters wove between the barnacles and the few open spots were speckled with anemones, sponges, chitons and little white sea stars.

All the while, we gradually edged up. The goosenecks stayed surprisingly thick, even in the kelp, and at the very end, in maybe 15 feet of water, we spotted one last treat: a 2-foot clump of large mussels colored a glowing cobalt with pearl-lined lips.

"OK," Mike said as we climbed aboard, "Who's up for a snorkel." We dropped our tanks, weights and lights and jumped back in. The idea was to form a long line, each person holding the fin of the person ahead of him and then sweep through a narrow passage

between two islands.

Talk about a rush! Mr. Toad's Wild Ride.

Slowly at first, and then with increasing speed, we got sucked toward what Mike calls The Flush: a passage half the width of our skiff. Above water, the barnacle-covered rocks swept by with alarming speed. Below, we flew over rocks and kelp. Three knots looks like Warp 9 from a water view. We shot through the other side, whooping and yelling, and then we climbed aboard and went through again.

To kill time between dives, we went for a short hike. Our aim was to find a trail built by the owner of the nearby Seymour Inlet Lodge. The lodge is a story by itself, a collection of cedar cabins floating on a log platform that serves as a scuba lodge.

We tied up to a branch and crawled ashore, bushwhacking up a game trail ... under and over fallen logs and through the brush. Finally, we found the trail: a thin, rugged path lined with a foot-thick sponge of moss that led to a platform where we sat and watched the torrent shake Tremble Island.

"You should see this when the tide's running the full 18 knots," lodge

BRANDON D. COLE

owner Bud Bowles said later. "The air's full of rainbows, and you've got to wear a raincoat, even on a sunny day."

That night, yet another front pushed through with 60-knot winds raging outside the inlet. It was downright spooky to sit there staring up at 100-foot cedars, watching their top 10 feet lean sideways in the wind. The water in the cove was glass-smooth, but outside it was like someone was shooting a fire hose sideways. The glassy surface ended in a smoky wall that was so turbulent, you couldn't even make out the 10-foot whitecaps.

Inside our cove, waves of fine rain softened the landscape, graying trees, sky and water into monotone. Two eagles skimmed the water, and thick-billed murrelets dived for sea bass.

A couple of days later, when the dive du jour could only muster 3 knots, it seemed tame. Nakwakto had, indeed, set the bar.



BRENDA WEAVER

THE JOYS OF NW DIVING

Frankly, diving the top end of Vancouver Island is not your mother's Caribbean holiday. No, it's not really technical diving, but for the uninitiated, it's close enough. Water temperatures average in the mid-40s, which means dry-suits are a must. And that means carrying lots of weight. The currents mean hard work, so you're using lots of air. That means you're probably carting 102s and maybe a pony.

For the average guy, especially if he's using doubles, it comes to 100 pounds of gear. The average woman is hefting 70. And you're not falling off the back end of the live-aboard. You're climbing into skiffs and up ladders.

Many people here dive nitrox; not for its exotic flavor, but simply as a safety buffer and a hedge against fatigue. Maybe a quarter of the divers use pony tanks, and some divers carry a third small tank with argon to warm up their drysuits.

The BCDs tend to be techie models hung with

dozens of clips and rings, and there are expensive separate harnesses to tote the weights. Then, there's the whole drysuit matter, with its finicky zippers and seals, all of which makes even reaching across your chest for a valve a major undertaking.

Those who scoff at the idea of fitness for diving should try a day hefting 100 pounds of gear and battling balance and buoyancy in 45-degree water.

So, what is there to learn on such a venture?

Start with how to survive a back-roll entry from a skiff wearing a drysuit.

"You doing your otter imitation?" one diver asked as I flailed helplessly on my back after hitting the water. "Get all the air out of your suit and inflate your BC."

Worked like a charm.

Then we move along to kelp in a current. Rule No. 1: Don't thrash. Yes, you'll probably hook into a few plants, but odds are, you won't really be wound up in it. Just go with the flow, and let the current wash you out. Also, the stuff provides great handholds for getting down and is perfect for free-water safety stops.

It's also important not to surface in kelp. Not only does it tend to want to strangle you, but it does really nasty things to your pick-up skiff's prop. The idea is to come up, assess the thickness of the web around you, and then duck back down and swim under to get clear.

As for current, don't fight it, you can't anyway. Just go with the flow. Odds are, you'll eventually catch a back eddy and get pushed in the opposite direction. Besides, everyone else is in the same current and eventually, they'll show up right next to you.

And finally, the inevitable.

It rarely takes more than 24 hours aboard a northern live-aboard before you get to the bladder stories.

I am surely the only person in the history of the *Nautilus VII* to have developed a blister on my hand from flushing the head, which below deck involves lots of pumping with a small, metal handle.

Undoubtedly, I will join the ranks of *Nautilus* lore, along with the guy who lived a week with a baggie full of used diapers in his cabin.

AREA INFORMATION

The *Nautilus VII* live-aboard dive boat does multi-day trips ranging from two to seven days from February through early November. Trips run U.S.\$133 per person, per day and include food and heavy gear (tanks, weights). The boat can pump high-pressure steel tanks and supply nitrox.

Diving the northern end of Vancouver Island is NOT for novices, especially divers unfamiliar with currents and very cold water. In addition to the adrenaline pumping Nakwakto run, the *Nautilus* also does more benign trips to calmer waters along Vancouver Island.

Water clarity in the Northwest is usually best during cold months when plankton dies off, but the weather is far more comfortable in summer; even in August, you can usually avoid the worst of the plankton blooms.

Early fall and late spring can be pivotal times, with warm, clear weather and decent water visibility. For that reason, spring and fall are very popular dive seasons in the Northwest.

CONTACTS

For information on the *Nautilus VII*, contact Lever Diving, PO Box 2256 VMP0, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6B 3W2; (888) 434-8322; e-mail Mike@divelc.com; web: www.divebc.com.

For information on Seymour Inlet Lodge, contact the lodge at PO Box 1229, Port Hardy, British Columbia, Canada, V0N 2P0; (888) 978-9050; web: www.scubabc.com.



AFTER THE STORM

Remembering the way each of the Bay Islands had enchanted me in years past, I contemplated the reality that Hurricane Mitch might have damaged much of what I came to admire.

Staring straight into the eye of one of the largest and most powerful storms in history, these remote islands off the Honduras coast endured torrential pounding last October. For almost two days, 180-mph sustained winds gusting to more than 250 mph combined with a relentless tidal surge of up to 25 feet to punish this popular diving destination.

Although significant damage occurred in some areas, a remarkable recovery effort put most resorts and dive operations back in business within a month after the storm. The only problem was, it took a while for the word to get out. Tourism lagged as a result, and many resorts have since offered special deals to attract clientele back to the islands.

Now, at the request of *Sport Diver* magazine, I, too, had come to witness the storm's aftermath and to report on what Mitch left behind.

GUANAJA

Flying 3,000 feet above the Bay Islands, the greenery covering Utila and Roatan was clearly visible by plane. Such was not the case for Guanaja, however. This easternmost island was hardest hit, and leaves were stripped from almost every tree. Yet as our plane approached the runway, I could see signs of renewed life sprouting from some of those left standing, and beneath, low-growth vegetation flourished.

Bayman Bay Club owner Tom Fouke says he is reforesting his property with Inga, a type of legume that grows to 30 feet. In addition, the Honduras government will begin to replant the rest of the island with Caribbean pine once the rainy season starts in October.

The Bayman Bay Club, poised hillside along Guanaja's northern shore, caught the brunt of the storm. Eight cabanas and the resort's docks were lost, and several other structures were damaged. A temporary dock and a dozen units have since been repaired, and the resort reopened shortly before Christmas. Plans to rebuild the lost cabins are slated for the near future.

A Return Visit to the Bay Islands Yields Good News

STORY & PHOTOS BY BRET FORBES



The island of Guanaja was hardest hit among the Bay Islands. However, the only remaining damage seems to be broken vegetation. Resorts are back up and new environmental programs are helping turtles and whale sharks.



Posada Del Sol, which is located on the island's south side, also received considerable damage and was closed for more than four months while it underwent renovations.

Nearby Bonaca, the main settlement on a tiny cay adjacent to Guanaja, was miraculously spared for the most part. The only evidence of Mitch is found on the outskirts of town, where standing pilings tell of houses lost to the storm. Residents of the north shore town of Mangrove Bight weren't as fortunate, however, and most of the settlement's stilt houses were destroyed.

Whenever relief supplies show up, Mitch becomes a household word once again as flocks of locals pilot their small powerboats and dugout canoes toward the commercial docks to stake their claim, an act commonly referred to as

going to get some "Mitch."

Confident of how well things were operating topside, I was curious about the conditions beneath the surface. For the most part, I found that shallow reefs of 20 feet or less contained a noticeable amount of broken and overturned corals, mostly staghorn and elkhorn varieties. As I descended, however, any signs of damage disappeared, and the corals and colorful sponges clinging to the island's underwater walls remained very much intact.

The scenic drop-off at Tortuga reef had plenty of macro critters hiding among live corals, and schools of Creole wrasses and yellowtails abounded. The only significant damage I noticed here included a few torn vase sponges and tattered sea fans in depths between 30 and 40 feet. On the

south side of the island, popular sites such as the Jado Trader wreck and Jim's Silverlode were virtually unscathed, and resident groupers and moray eels were out and about in number.

"The hurricane cleansed and revitalized our reefs," said Chris Norris, Bayman Bay Club's operations manager. "More fish are now found in the areas affected by the storm, and the areas that weren't are the same as they always were."

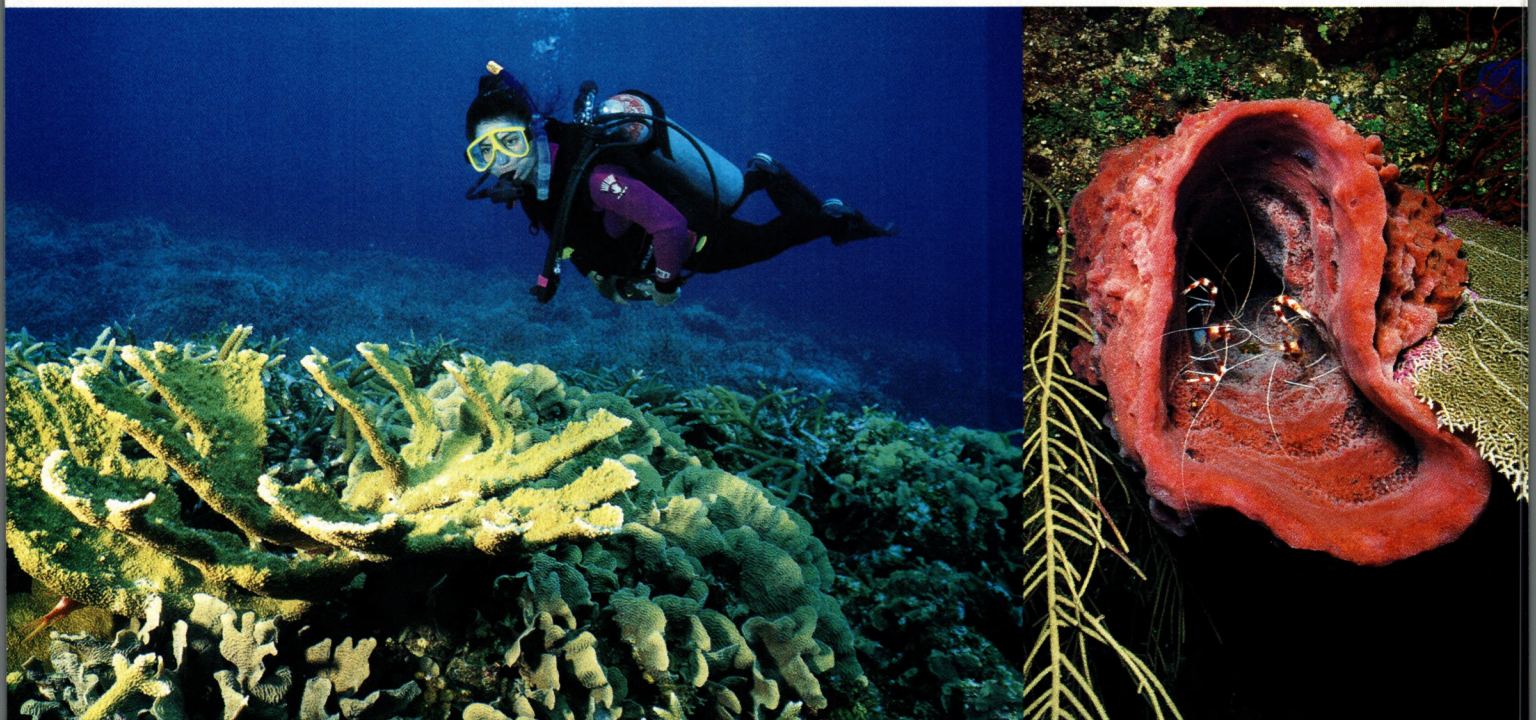
ROATAN

When I arrived on Roatan, the first thing I noticed was how lush and clean the island looked. If I hadn't already been there before, I wouldn't have been able to tell that a hurricane had ever passed through.

All of the resorts were up and running, with Anthony's Key Resort (AKR) being the final one to reopen on Jan. 30. AKR underwent extensive reconstruction due to damage from the high surge that rolled in from the north. During construction, many of the cabanas on the key were also updated with air conditioning.

"A total of 16 cabins were lost dur-

Above water, relief efforts continue for some on Guanaja. Below water — with little exception — reefs have been cleansed and revitalized, and marine creatures seem to be thriving.



ing the storm," said Samir Galindo, one of the resort managers at Anthony's Key. "The main dock and our dolphin enclosures were also damaged. But now, everything is completely rebuilt and things are pretty much back to normal."

The shallow reefs received minor damage to corals and sea fans on the north coast of the island, but overall, the reefs are in great shape. The wreck *El Aguila*, scuttled about a year ago, is now broken into three pieces, each accumulating growth and still considered a great dive.

On the south side of Roatan, the reefs are in excellent condition. Sites such as Mary's Place and Calvin's Crack are virtually the same as before the storm, and the visibility is back to its normal 80 to 100 feet. The *Prince Albert* wreck also remains exactly the way I remembered it from a year ago.

Occasionally, I spotted a damaged sponge or overturned stand of pillar coral on a wall dive, and every now and then a telltale tree trunk was seen lying on the bottom. Plenty of seahorses were discovered on these dives. I saw two of them hanging onto red rope sponges at Minagerhea's Reef. Although I was told they all disappeared after the storm, many have since returned, suggesting they might have traveled to deeper water to ride out the storm.

Billy Hale, operations manager for

CoCo View Resort, said Mitch invigorated the larger marine life in the area. He spotted three whale sharks swimming together on a dive in February. Whale shark sightings are infrequent around Roatan, occurring every few months, so finding a trio was a special treat.

CoCo View Resort itself sustained little damage and now sports a new gazebo and walkways connecting Hawksbill Key. This adjoining island

CONTINUED ON PAGE 84



BAY ISLANDS ECO-TOURING

The Roatan Institute for Marine Sciences at Anthony's Key Resort has long promoted vacations that involve interactive programs, such as teaching the anatomy, physiology and behavioral characteristics of dolphins. So the recent introduction of several new eco-tourism programs in the Bay Islands is not a brand-new idea. What's different, however, is the agenda of these new programs, which involve repopulating certain species and learning how to protect others.

ON MAY 15, THE SHARK RESEARCH INSTITUTE, in alliance with Utila Lodge, initiated a program in which snorkelers interact with whale sharks and take part in a satellite tagging operation dedicated to tracking their migratory and behavioral patterns.

The weeklong program includes seminars on whale sharks and other marine life, dive trips, and snorkeling excursions to interact with whale sharks.

The Shark Research Institute satellite-tagged its first whale shark in February. These tags, known as SDR (satellite-linked time-depth recorders), calculate the locations of tagged fish via signals transmitted to the Service Argos Satellite System orbiting the earth. These signals are in turn sent to processing centers, where the data is made available on line.

At the time of the first SDR tagging, tissue samples were also taken from a whale shark for DNA research. Program manager Jim Engel said these samples are compared with others to determine whether harvesting of these fish, which is done in other parts of the world, is affecting the entire species or just a single family.

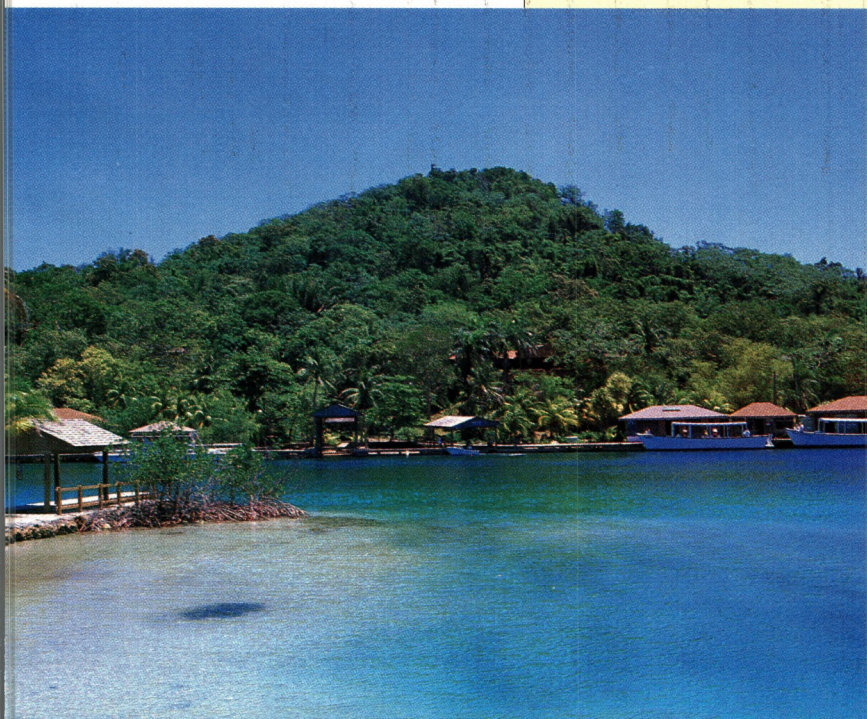
ANOTHER EFFORT TO ASSIST NATURE in the Bay Islands has recently debuted at CoCo View Resort on Roatan. Sea turtles that were injured during the hurricane are being nursed back to health in marine pens built in the shallow water off Hawksbill Key. Future plans for this rehabilitation facility include raising hatchlings for reintroduction into the wild.

"The whole idea is to repopulate the Bay Islands with sea turtles," said CoCo View Resort owner Bill Evans. "When I first came here, they were spotted every second or third dive. You still see them on dives but not as often."

Evans said the program will be an educational experience. A snorkeling interaction program is planned.

AT THE BAYMAN BAY CLUB ON GUANAJA, as on the other two islands, iguana farms are quickly becoming the way of the future. Compounds have been constructed for a raise-and-release program involving two types of these endangered reptiles.

These efforts will help repopulate the species, once hunted to near extinction. There is now a government ban on iguana hunting.



More North Americans are discovering there's life south of Cancun. Adventurers knew it all along.

Return to Riviera Maya

The ecological parks of Xel-ha and Xcaret provide visitors the opportunity to drift an underground river by inner tube, swim with dolphins in a crystal-clear sparkling lagoon or relax on a palm-shaded beach.

Back in the late 1970s, I joined several college buddies on a spring break getaway to the fabulous new resort of Cancun. After a few days of sitting on the beach, we decided to rent a Jeep and head out for parts unknown. Our journey took us south along a jungle-shrouded two-lane road that ran through sleepy fishing villages and

skirted brilliant white-sand beaches. We stopped for tacos in a little place called Playa del Carmen, swam in a roadside cenote filled with crystal-clear fresh water, admired Mayan ruins at Tulum and napped on a deserted beach.

Although I didn't know it at the time, this would be the first of many visits to the eastern coastline of the Yucatan. Dive trips to Cozumel would often include a day trip to Playa del

Carmen by ferry. Later, when offshore fishing became a passion, I spent time in the developing resort village of Puerto Aventuras. These days, I make the beachside village of Akumal my base of operations when exploring the area's magnificent underwater caverns and cave systems.

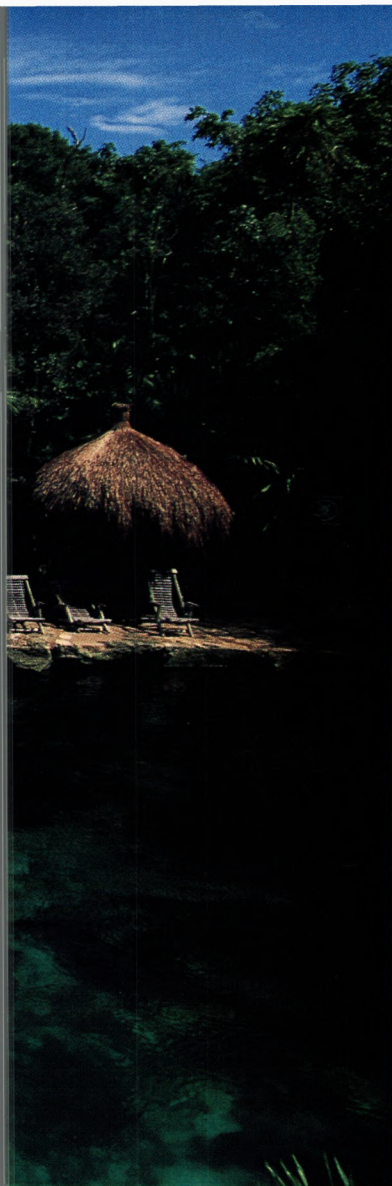
For years, this region was described in vague terms such as "south of Cancun," or "across from Cozumel." The eastern Yucatan coast

seemed immune to the influences of development and mainstream tourism. Except for the tour buses that delivered Cancun day-trippers to the ruins of Tulum, it remained the playground of in-the-know travelers who patronized small hotels, guesthouses and privately managed rental condos.

But, no more. In the past couple of years, the world has discovered this unspoiled piece of

Caribbean coast. The 70 miles of beachfront between Puerto Morelos and Tulum is becoming one of the hottest new resort destinations in the Caribbean, and it even has a new name that reflects its heightened stature among sun seekers: the Riviera Maya.

Signs of growth are everywhere. A brand-new four-lane ribbon of concrete runs from Cancun south to Tulum, and at regular intervals along its length, grandiose gatehouses give access to golf courses, upscale villas and secluded luxury resorts. And for every new resort now open for business, two more are under



number of available hotel rooms within the next four years.

Will this change spoil the very things that first attracted many of us to this quiet coastline? To date, the answer is no. Unlike Cancun, with its unbroken string of beachfront high-rises, chain restaurants and raucous nightclubs, the Riviera Maya is about secluded luxury. The majority of new resorts are self-contained properties set on hundreds of landscaped acres and hidden from the road by a buffer of jungle green.

While many visitors to the Riviera Maya come from Europe, North Americans are also discovering that there is life south of Cancun and west of Cozumel. This tourism wave also includes a growing number of divers.

Historically, many of the small beachfront dive concessions scattered along the coast focused on providing resort courses and shallow-reef tours for guests at the all-inclusive resorts. But as the region grows, new dive operators are beginning to market to experienced divers by offering multi-tank dives,

construction. If the current rate of development continues, the area will double the



Contact Info

RIVIERA MAYA GENERAL INFORMATION: 1-800-GO-PLAYA; Apdo. Postal, 31 Playa del Carmen, Quintana Roo, Mexico, 77710; e-mail: info@rivieramaya.com; Web: rivieramaya.com

PLAYA DEL CARMEN HOTEL ASSOCIATION: Phone: 011-52-987-306-46

MEXICAN GOVERNMENT TOURIST OFFICE: 1-800-44-MEXICO; Fax-Mexico: 541-385-9282, Document Number 611 and 612

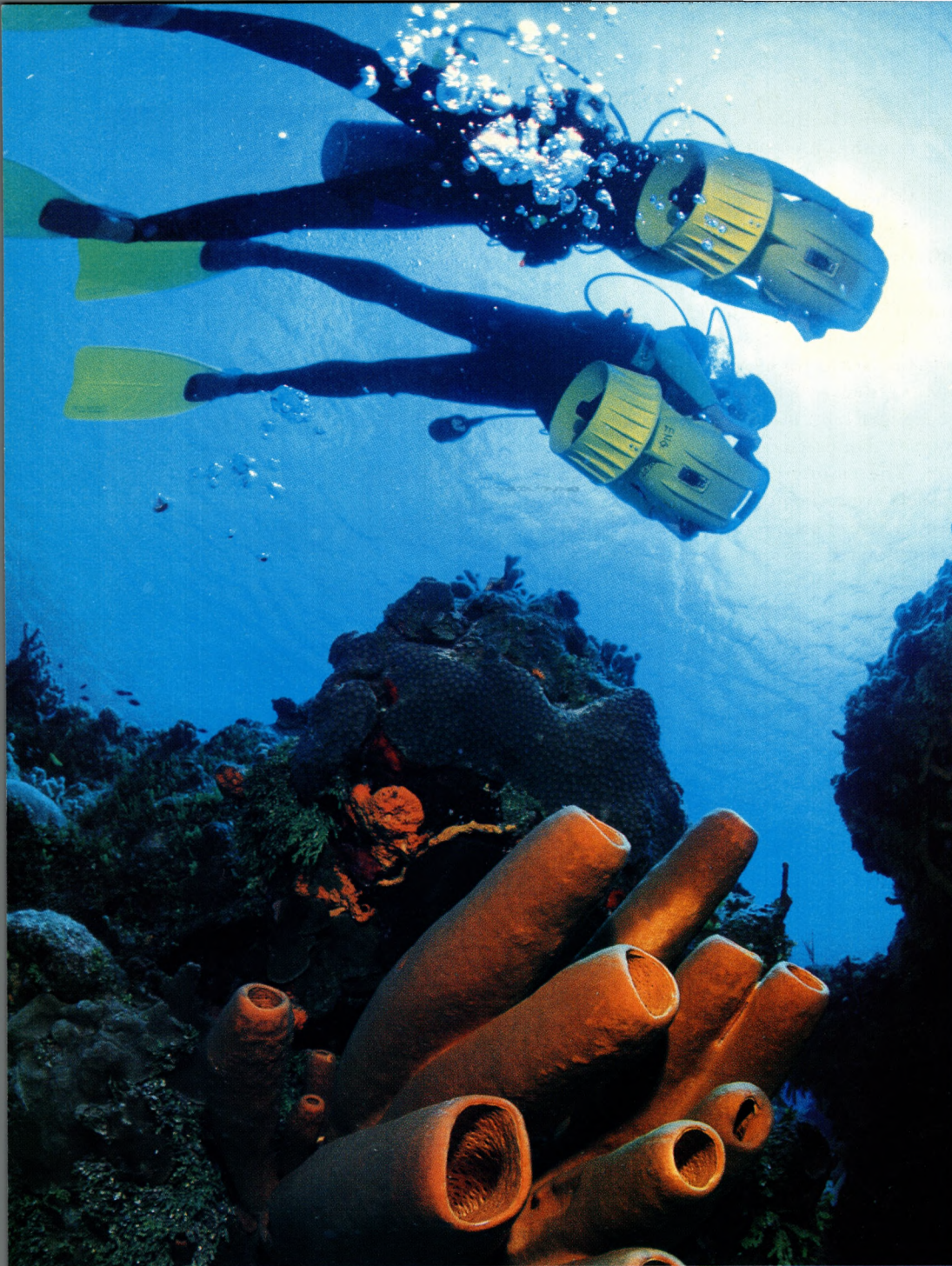
MEXICO TOURISM: 800-44-MEXICO.

RIVIERA MAYA DIVE OPERATORS

1	ABYSS DIVE SHOP	011-52-987-32164	E-MAIL: abyss@playadelcarmen.com
2	AQUATECH	011-52-987-59020	E-MAIL: 105107.2445@compuserve.com
3	CEDAM DIVE CENTERS	011-52-987-35129	WEB: www.cedamdive.com
4	CYAN-HA	011-52-987-30978	E-MAIL: buceocyanha@playadelcarmen.com
5	DIVE PALANCAR	1-800-433-0885	E-MAIL: herndon@dsi-divetours.com
6	PHOCEA CARIBE	011-52-987-31024	E-MAIL: phoce@playadelcarmen.com
7	SEAFARI	011-52-987-30901	E-MAIL: seafari@spin.com.mx
8	SEALIFE	011-52-987-314555	E-MAIL: sealife@playadelcarmen.mx
9	TANK-HA DIVE CENTER	011-52-987-30302	E-MAIL: tankha@playadelcarmen.com
10	TARRAYA CLUB NAUTICO	011-52-987-32040	E-MAIL: gillet@yucl.telmex.net.mx
11	TREASURE HUNTER	011-52-987-62232	E-MAIL: lafitte@grool.telemex.net.mx
12	X-CARET	011-52-987-30900	



BRENDA WEAVER



For example, couples visiting one of the new resorts could begin the day with a walk on the beach, grab a morning dive, play 18 holes of golf in the afternoon, and then enjoy a massage before dinner. Likewise, divers such as myself who are now in a family way can rent a beachfront condo in Akumal, spend the morning on the beach with the kids, then spend the afternoon in the ocean — or making a cavern or cave dive in one of the many nearby cenotes.

The ecological parks of Xel-ha and Xcaret provide the opportunity to drift an underground river by inner tube, swim with dolphins in a sparkling lagoon or relax on a palm-shaded beach. Just down the coast, the ruins of Tulum and Coba await, and the now-bustling town of Playa del Carmen offers restaurants, shops and nightlife.

To date, the nature of the region's development guarantees it will not become another Cancun. With more than 90 miles of coastline and millions of acres of white-sand beaches, the Riviera Maya still has plenty of solitude to go around — and plenty of reefs that have yet to see a diver's bubbles. ■

farther-ranging boats and new sites.

The western side of the Cozumel channel doesn't have the steep walls and jet-stream-style currents found on Cozumel, but coral and fish life are abundant and healthy. The eastern winds and swells that predominate throughout much of the year are also more of a factor than on Cozumel's western shore. But the Riviera Maya's ace in the hole is the growing num-

ber of accessible freshwater sites — sites that are now luring divers to the mainland to experience what many consider to be the world's finest cavern diving.

In reality, the Riviera Maya is not competing for a share of Cozumel's traditional dive market. Instead, it is attracting a different breed of diver: Those who hope to include underwater pleasures in a multi-activity or family vacation.



The Riviera Maya is becoming one of the hottest new resort destinations in the Caribbean. Signs of growth are everywhere. Grandiose gatehouses give access to golf courses, upscale villas and secluded luxury resorts.



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Fort Lauderdale

With abundant fish life, easily accessible reefs and water temperatures that rarely drop below the mid-70s, Fort Lauderdale and surrounding Broward County offer divers a year-round underwater experience. In recent years, the area's natural underwater attractions have also been

supplemented by the creation of two designated areas for the sinking of artificial reefs.

Since 1982, the Broward County Department of Natural Resource Protection, with the help of the Pompano Beach Fishing Rodeo and various private individuals and companies, has created more than 80 artificial reefs off the coast of Broward County. The reefs are sunk at various depths to accommodate both divers and fishermen. Most commonly sunk are

artificial reef modules, limestone rocks, ships and barges. To keep these wrecks from being navigational hazards, most lie in water 60 feet or deeper.

"Even though we have three distinct, healthy reef lines offshore, we began sinking artificial reefs off the coast for several reasons," said Ken Banks, director of the county resource agency. "The first reason was to offset fishing and diving pressure on the natural reefs. It was also thought that the new habitats would create more

fisheries."

Sunk as a joint venture between Broward and Miami-Dade counties, five oil-drilling platforms donated by the Tenneco Oil Corporation were placed about a mile and a half offshore, near the county line. These rigs, known as Tenneco Towers, make the best artificial reef dive in south Florida. Only three of the platforms are within recreational diving limits. Their tops are in depths of 60, 80 and 100 feet.

The area's ever-present

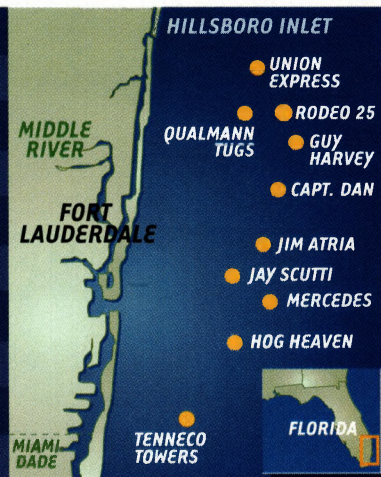
current passes through these open structures, producing the healthiest and most mature sponge and coral growth of any site in Florida. Bull sharks are frequently seen patrolling the perimeters during the winter. Sharks are also seen regularly at the *Captain Dan* and Qualmann Tugboats wreck sites.

The most famous of all Fort Lauderdale wrecks is the *Mercedes I*. The *Mercedes*, a 198-foot freighter, received national attention in November 1984 when it crashed into the seawall of Palm Beach socialite Mollie Wilmoth, one door down from the former Kennedy estate. It took more than four months to remove the

FORT LAUDERDALE

TOP 10 WRECKS

1	TENNECO TOWERS	TYPE OF VESSEL: submerged oil rigs	DEPTH: 65-100 ft.
2	CAPTAIN DAN	TYPE OF VESSEL: 175-foot Coast Guard cutter	DEPTH: 85-110 ft.
3	JAY SCUTTI	TYPE OF VESSEL: 100-foot tugboat	DEPTH: 45-65 ft.
4	HOG HEAVEN	TYPE OF VESSEL: 180-foot barge with concrete debris	DEPTH: 45-65 ft.
5	GUY HARVEY	TYPE OF VESSEL: 170-foot freighter	DEPTH: 115-142 ft.
6	JIM ATRIA	TYPE OF VESSEL: 240-foot freighter	DEPTH: 75-135 ft.
7	MERCEDES	TYPE OF VESSEL: 198-foot freighter	DEPTH: 75-95 ft.
8	UNION EXPRESS	TYPE OF VESSEL: 170-foot freighter	DEPTH: 110 ft.
9	QUALMANN TUGS	TYPE OF VESSEL: two tugboats, 85-foot schooner	DEPTH: 80-85 ft.
10	RODEO 25	TYPE OF VESSEL: 215-foot freighter	DEPTH: 90-125 ft.





Five oil platforms were sunk near the Broward/Miami-Dade county line in 65-100 feet of water. These "Tenneco Towers" make one of the finest artificial reef dives in south Florida.



The wreck of the Mercedes I lies in about 85 feet of water. Its hull has collapsed, and the stern and wheelhouse list to starboard. The 198-foot freighter washed up on Palm Beach in 1984.

stricken vessel.

The wreck now sits upright in about 85 feet. The hull has collapsed, and the stern and wheelhouse are now listing hard to starboard but are still attached to the rest of the wreck. The motorcycle placed by a prankster years ago is home to a cleaning station with multiple juvenile blue-headed wrasses. The combination of the wreck itself, a nearby coral garden and a ledge running north adjacent to the wreck makes the

site a haven for fish life.

The wreck of the *Copenhagen*, a 325-foot steam ship, was Broward County's first Underwater Archaeological Preserve in 1994. Just south of the site lies one of the original anchors and a plaque commemorating the site's distinction. The *Copenhagen* crashed into the Pompano drop-off in 1900 on a calm, sunny morning. The wreck sat about halfway out of the water until World War II, when it was first used for target practice, then

blown apart to prevent U-boats from being able to sneak up close to shore behind it.

The site is reminiscent of the famous *Sugar Wreck* of the Bahamas because there isn't much structure, but the site is loaded with fish and creatures. The *Copenhagen* sits

in only 15 to 30 feet of water, making it ideal for both divers and snorkelers.

Sunk in 1997, the *Guy Harvey* has quickly become one of Broward County's most popular artificial reefs. The 170-foot former freighter sits on the bottom in 140 feet of water. Harvey, a well-known marine artist, requested that the wreck be prepared for divers. Silhouettes painted by Harvey on the sides of the hull are gone but have been replaced by sea fans and sponges.

Though the wreck's hull sits below the recreational diving limit, a disciplined diver can explore the main deck and wheelhouse at 100 to 120 feet.

The Fort Lauderdale area sports a multitude of wrecks. These sunken ships are at a variety of depths to accommodate divers of all training and experience levels. More than a dozen dive operators make the trips.

To learn more about the south Florida diving opportunities, plan on visiting Ocean Fest this fall. Ocean Fest is a three-day open-air festival featuring more than 100 diving and snorkeling exhibits. There is also live music, seminars, photo contests and an underwater treasure hunt. As part of the event, more than 20 dive operators participate in one of the world's largest underwater clean-ups. This year's Ocean Fest will take place September 17-19 at El Prado Square in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, a mile-long suburb of Fort Lauderdale. 

OCEAN FEST '99

September 17-19 at El Prado Square in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, Florida. For more information on either attending or exhibiting, contact the Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce at (954) 776-1000, or visit the Web site at www.oceanfest.com.

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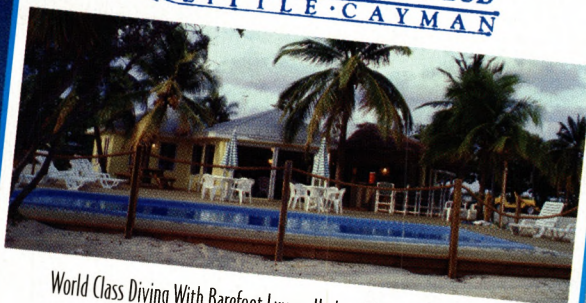
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BAY ISLANDS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 75
is now not only the site of weekly barbecues, but it is also the new home of a raise-and-release turtle program.

Nearby Fantasy Island also sustained little damage, resulting in merely beach erosion and some downed trees. Hank Hynds, dive center manager, believes the hurricane actually helped the reefs by lowering the water temperature, thus reversing coral bleaching. Underwater, temperatures were running between 84

and 86 degrees prior to Mitch. I recorded 78 to 80 degrees among all of the sites I dived.

UTILA

As with Roatan, Utila also received minimal damage from the storm. Since this island is situated some 68 miles west of Guanaja, it wasn't affected by the storm's strongest elements. Other than some replaced boards on docks and a few minor repairs to buildings, the only apparent topside damage I noted was 3

miles from town at Pumpkin Hill Beach. Once a sugary sand beach lined with coconut palms, it was eroded by the surge, exposing a rocky shoreline beneath windswept trees. High storm surge is also blamed for covering the airport runway with debris.

"The first 10 days after the hurricane, we worked to clear the runway," said Jim Engel, owner of Utila Lodge. "We pushed aside logs and sea fans to get it back into operation. It's currently in the best condition it's been in five years."

Exploring the diversity of reefs surrounding Utila revealed little change from the last time I visited. The shallower sites on the north side of the island featured an occasional toppled elkhorn coral lying in the sand but remaining very much alive.

The offshore seamounts were in pristine shape, covered with healthy corals and tropical fish. Black Hills was still infested with brilliant bluebell tunicates, a variety common to this region. The top of Jak's Bight on the western side of the island had healthy corals and sea fans harboring several flamingo tongues near the edge of the drop-off, where I also eyed an eagle ray cruising below.

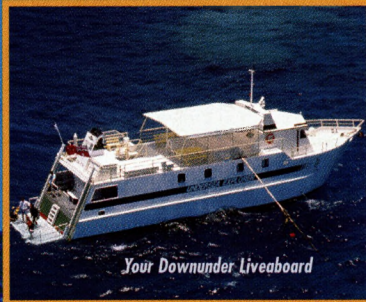
Although Utila's claim to fame has long been its diversity, with the added convenience of being able to dive all around the island, another popular activity is quickly grabbing the lime-light. Whale shark encounters are becoming commonplace, and a new eco-tourism program debuted on May 15. Utila Lodge guests can now assist the Shark Research Institute with tagging the largest fishes in the ocean.

In fact, each of these islands has recently implemented new amenities geared toward education and protecting several endangered creatures ranging from sea turtles to iguanas. These interactive programs have created yet another venue for divers to enjoy while off-gassing between dives.

If you've been putting off a visit to the Bay Islands for fear of storm damage, you can stop worrying and start packing. A trip to these unique islands will provide not only great diving, but also opportunities to learn and to play a part in marine conservation and research.

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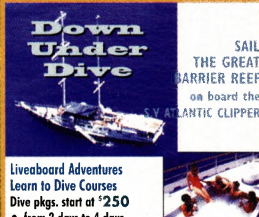
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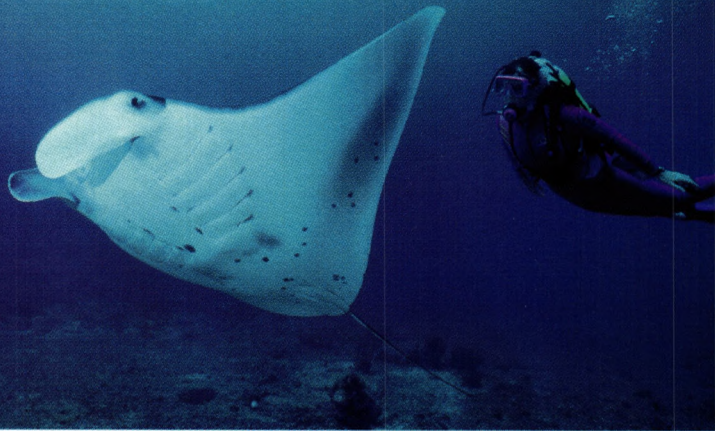
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Take your best shot on Bonaire. Pro Tip #3.

PRO-SHOOTER RICK SAMMON'S TIPS ON NIGHTTIME SHOOTING IN BONAIRE

Bonaire is known as the "Night Diving Capital of the Caribbean" because small subjects are everywhere – on the piers, reefs and in the shallows. Here's how you can get shots like the pros in the darkness of night:

- Tip 1: Dive with a guide. An expert divemasters can help you find great subjects. . . fast! Their expertise gives you more time to take more pictures.
- Tip 2: Use a modeling light. If your strobe does not have a modeling light, attach an underwater flashlight to the strobe head with a dive-light holster. This technique helps you aim your strobe and leaves your hands free to adjust camera controls.
- Tip 3: Fill the frame. The old photo adage, "The name of the game is to fill the frame," applies underwater, too. If you don't fill the frame with a subject, you may get an overexposed picture.
- Tip 4: Watch the background. Remember that the background can make or break a picture.
- Tip 5: Choose your film carefully. Color print film has a wider exposure latitude than slide film, first-time night diving photographers will get a higher percentage of properly exposed pictures if they use print film.
- Tip 6: Think small. Choose the smallest aperture on your lens for maximum depth-of-field (the area of a picture that's in focus.)

This is the third in a six-part series on how the pros shoot world-class photos in Bonaire. Rick Sammon chose Bonaire as one of the sites for his best-selling book, "Rhythm of the Reef."

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From fun vacations in the Caribbean sun to fabulous deals in the Far East, here is the latest news from around the diving world.

TRAVEL NEWS



Antarctica!

The company that pioneered ice- and cold-water-diving tours above the Arctic Circle is now offering the first scheduled diving excursions to Antarctica.

Oceanwide Expeditions has offered ship-based nature tours to remote, uninhabited islands of the northern and southern hemispheres for more than a decade. In 1997, they hosted the first group of scuba divers to visit the seldom-visited arctic island of Spitsbergen.

Now, for the coming Antarctic summer, the company will offer first-ever dive tours to Antarctica and the Falkland Islands. Trips of 12 to 18 days long are scheduled from mid-November through early March, with itineraries that include the Falklands, South Shetlands, Deception Island, South Georgia Island and the continent of Antarctica.

All trips will leave from South America aboard the ice-strengthened Russian research vessels *Professor Molchanov* and *Viktor Bonitsky*. Most itineraries allow for one or two dives daily, and divers are encouraged to participate in other expedition activities such as shore hikes, nature watches and daily lectures.

Participants should have some familiarity with drysuit and ice diving, and are encouraged to bring their own equipment, although rental equipment is available. An experienced polar diver will serve as divemaster, along with two qualified dive guides.

From May to August, Oceanwide Expeditions also offers dive trips and nature tours to northern destinations including the Faeroe islands, Greenland and Spitsbergen. For more on this unique opportunity to visit some of the most remote, fascinating dive sites on the planet, contact Oceanwide Expeditions at 800-453-7245 or e-mail oceanwh@infohwy.com



PHOTOS: AMCS NACHOUM

Regional News

DESTINATION

EASTERN CARIBBEAN

BONAIRE

AIR JAMAICA ADDS NEW FLIGHTS

Air Jamaica has begun weekly service from Montego Bay to Bonaire. Passengers traveling from Air Jamaica's U.S. gateways in Atlanta, Baltimore/Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, Newark, N.J., New York (JFK) and Philadelphia can connect to Bonaire through Montego Bay.

The Montego Bay flight departs at 11:50 a.m. on Saturdays and arrives in Bonaire at 2:35 p.m. The return flight leaves Bonaire at 2:20 p.m. and arrives in Montego Bay at 4:05 p.m.

For more information and reservations, call Air Jamaica at 800-523-5585; Web: www.airjamaica.com.

BON BINI ADDS SSI

Bon Bini Divers has announced the addition of SSI (Scuba Schools International) to its scuba training affiliations. In addition to its prior ratings as a PADI Five-Star Gold Palm Resort and an SSI Universal Referral Location, Bon Bini Divers (a full SSI dealer) can offer the broad range of SSI training products and courses.

Bon Bini Divers can offer full courses from the basic level through leadership training for either SSI or PADI, including instructor training for SSI. Bon Bini also can receive students through the Universal Referral Program for NASDS, YMCA, PDIC, IDEA or NAUI.

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HARBOUR VILLAGE SUMMER BONAIRE DIVE SPECIAL

Guests at **Harbour Village** in Bonaire can take advantage of special pricing on scuba packages through the summer and fall of this year.

The seven-night Summer Dive Special package includes a standard room, daily continental breakfast buffet, six boat dives and unlimited shore diving, tanks and weights, round-trip airport transfers, a cocktail reception and complimentary use of the resort's sailboats and kayaks. This package is priced at \$778 per person, double occupancy, and is valid through December 11. Guests arriving between August 28 and October 1 also enjoy a complimentary daily lunch at the resort's beachside restaurant, La Balandra Beach Bar and Grill.

Also available is the Dive Into

Luxury package, which upgrades guests to a Beachfront Junior Suite, provides a VIP amenity basket, free one-day car rental, complimentary use of the spa facility, fitness equipment and classes, along with day and night use of tennis courts. This package is priced at \$1,348 per person, double occupancy, and is available through December 11.

The resort property includes a full-service PADI 5 star Golden Palm and NAUI dive and instruction center, with four modern dive boats capable of accommodating up to 26 divers.

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CAYMAN ISLANDS MAX OUT ON GRAND CAYMAN

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sis on dive? **Grand Cayman's Parrots Landing** offers "Cayman to the Max 1999" from Sept. 8 to Dec. 15.

This year, Parrots Landing has teamed up with **Coconut Harbour, Indies Suites** and **Sleep Inn** to provide an "unlimited-diving" program. "Divers can dive as much or as little as they'd like during Cayman to the Max (1999)," Parrots Landing's Thomas K. Shropshire said. "But the program is again designed to: Come enjoy the beautiful walls and reefs of Grand Cayman."

Parrots Landing offers several boat trips daily, including an advanced computer boat, two-tank a.m. and p.m. dives, and Stingray City and night dives.

Cayman to the Max 1999 includes seven nights (five and three nights are also available) at the hotel of your choice, hotel taxes and gratuities, airport transfers and unlimited boat diving with Parrots Landing. Complimentary shore dives are available on boat-dive days.

Depending which hotel you choose, rates for the seven-night/six-day experience range from \$862 to \$943/per person/double occupancy. For a five-night package, the rate is \$600 to \$658 and for three nights, \$338 to 373.

Blackout dates apply from Oct. 22-Nov. 2 (Pirates Week) and Nov. 24-30.

For more information on Cayman to the Max 1999, contact Parrots Landing at 800-448-0428 or e-mail: parrots@candw.ky.

RED SAIL ADDS NITROX

Red Sail Sports in Grand Cayman has introduced nitrox into its diving program. Nitrox fills are available at the shop for an additional charge of \$5 per tank. Divers must be nitrox-certified or they must enroll in a one-day nitrox course.

In other news from Red Sail, Rod McDowall, operations manager, has been elected president of the Cayman Islands Watersports Operators Association. The organization's guidelines help set safety, conservation and education standards around the world.

One of McDowall's goals is to reintroduce the Cayman Islands as

Sightseeing along the wall in Grand Cayman. This fall, divers can "max" out with special dive packages.



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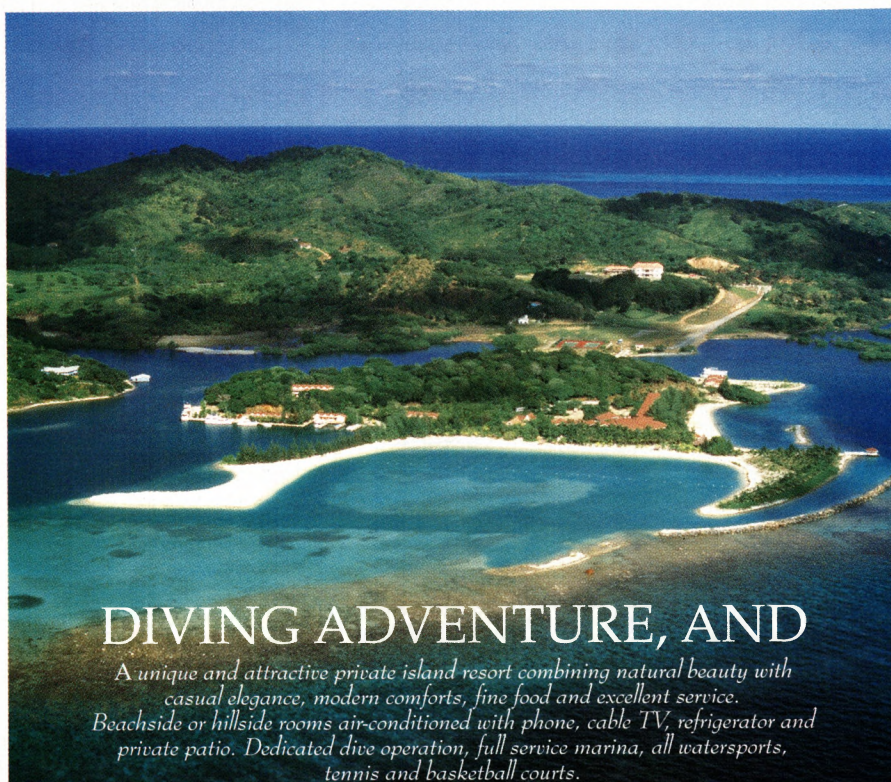


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Bahamas



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CURAÇAO

HABITAT'S Y2K SPECIAL

To celebrate the millennium, **Habitat Curaçao** will give away a week of free accommodations and unlimited diving for two.

Each month Habitat Curaçao's e-mail newsletter The Freedom Journal has a rhyming riddle describing a beautiful sea creature that can be seen on the Habitat's shore dive. The first person to answer correctly wins a T-shirt and two entries in the draw.

Each person thereafter who guesses correctly also wins an entry in the draw. Only one entry is allowed per person, per month, but readers can play each successive month through 1999.

Divers who want to receive The Freedom Journal, can e-mail divecuracao@habitatdiveresorts.com with the text, "Sign me up to win!" The newsletter is free.

The winner will be drawn at midnight during Habitat Curacao's Millennium New Year's Eve bash and announced the following day in the January 2000 issue of the Journal.

NABSD RETURNS TO CURACAO

The National Association of Black Scuba Divers will hold its 10th-annual Dive Summit Nov. 10-14 at **Princess Beach Resort and Casino in Curaçao**. The association is a non-profit group that promotes diving, marine conservation and environmental awareness.

Dive Summit events include dive trips, introductory scuba experiences, and seminars on safety, environmental issues and marketing youth scuba and swim programs in the United States.

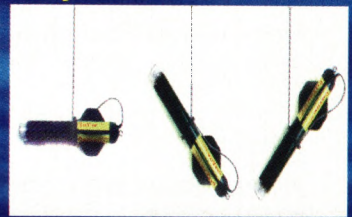
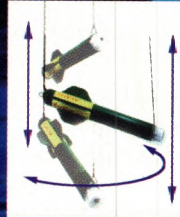
The association also will open the event this year to local Curacao divers.

Everybody's Seeing It!

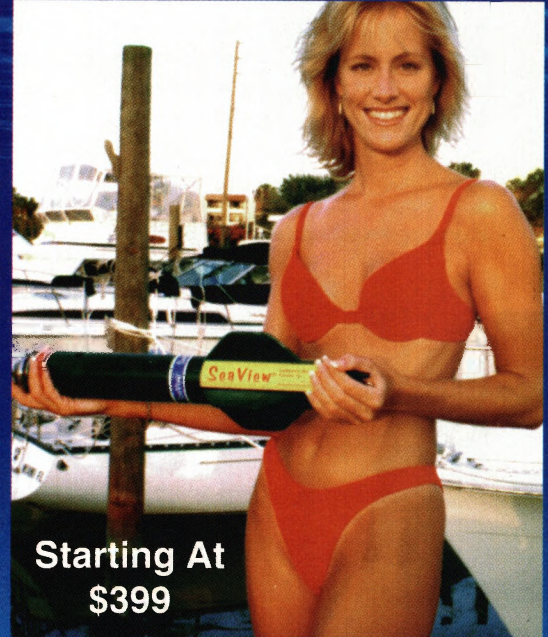
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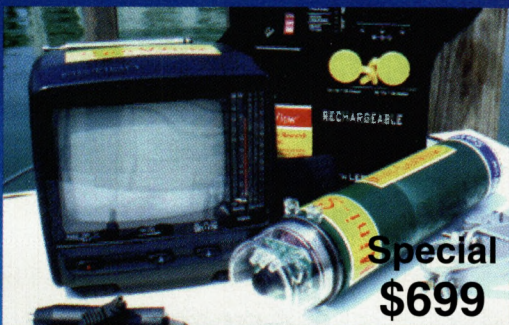
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BVI

BVI FIELD STUDIES PROGRAM

Odyssey Expeditions has introduced a new Field Studies program for students interested in marine science and oceanography. This program incorporates a detailed curriculum along with underwater activities specifically designed to teach methods of collect-

ing scientifically sound ecological data. During the program, which is conducted aboard 45-foot sailing catamarans on the waters of the British Virgin Islands, students can earn either PADI Advanced or Rescue Diver certifications.

Rather than a traditional curriculum that involves memorization and formal testing, the Field Studies program provides students with first-hand experience in conducting real scientific research during oceanic expeditions.

Voyages are typically three weeks in duration. In addition to research activities, students will have opportunities to participate in underwater photography and videography programs, as well as engage in activities such as sea-kayaking, windsurfing, water-skiing, rain forest hikes, first-aid training, bird-watching and education in island history.

The cost for this all-inclusive program is \$3,850, and programs are scheduled for June, July and August of each summer. Academic credit can be arranged. For more information, contact Odyssey Expeditions at 352-527-3366, e-mail: odyssey@usa.net, www.odysseyexpeditions.org



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TURKS & CAICOS

TURKS & CAICOS AGGRESSOR UPGRADED

In the spring of this year, a complete refit of the 100-foot live-aboard dive vessel **Turks & Caicos Aggressor** was completed. The 14-passenger dive yacht underwent extensive upgrades which included a remodeling of all living quarters, salon, galley, sun deck and dive deck.

The most notable modifications were made to the guests' staterooms and the salon. Five of the large staterooms now feature double and single berths with ensuite baths. The sixth cabin is a roomy quad that accommodates four divers, with a private head and shower located right outside the door. Each stateroom is equipped with a TV/VCR.

The salon has been redesigned for guests' comfort. It is accented by a back-lit mural and is equipped with a personal computer station with a slide scanner and e-mail. Other amenities include a hot tub, partially covered sun deck with wet bar, slide film process-

ing lab and spacious dive deck.

There is also a new nitrox system for in-place tank fills. Two new custom-rigged chase boats with 60 hp outboards are available for shore excursions and up-close humpback whale encounters during the winter whale season.

For information and reservations, call your travel professional or Aggressor Fleet, Limited at 800-348-2628, e-mail: aggressor@Provo.net; Web: www.aggressor.com

DESTINATION

WESTERN CARIBBEAN

BELIZE

MAYAN FAMILY SPECIAL

The Mayan Princess Resort Hotel in San Pedro is offering a family special that includes a manatee-watch trip with lunch and snorkeling at Goff's Caye, a Caye Caulker trip with three snorkeling stops, air transfers to the island and free snorkeling lessons. The four-night special is available through Nov. 14 at a rate of \$1,056 for a family of four (two adults, two children under 12).

For more information, contact Magnum Belize at 800-447-2931; 218-847-0334; fax: 218-847-0334; e-mail: magnum@tekstar.com.

COZUMEL

NEW \$2 PARK DONATION

The Cozumel Reefs National Marine Park has started a three-pronged conservation program to protect the island's coral reef network. Park guests will be asked to purchase a \$2 identification bracelet either upon entrance to the park or from area dive operators.

Money generated from purchases will be used to pay for three ecological preservation programs, including scientific monitoring of reefs, public education and regulation of activities in natural areas.

The marine park also is planning a beach cleaning initiative and a project to create artificial reefs. The artificial reef project will allow temporary closure of certain reef areas to relieve them from environmental stress.

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The Cozumel Reefs National Marine Park was created in 1996 and encompasses 67,133 acres and about 85 percent of the island's dive sites.

DIVER'S PARADISE HOTEL PACKAGES

Ten Cozumel hotels recently announced an assortment of three- to seven-night, value-added "Diver's Paradise" packages. Prices for these packages range from as little as \$306 to \$1,766. The following hotels are participating in this program:

Casa Del Mar offers three-night dive packages starting at \$306 for one diver/one non-diver and \$406 for two divers. Seven-night packages range from \$707 for one diver/one non-diver and \$956 for two divers. Packages are valid through December 18 of this year. For reservations call 800-435-3240.

Coral Princess Hotel and Resort offers a three-night package for \$255 per person, double occupancy. Seven night packages are \$565 per person, based on double occupancy. Packages are valid through August 23. For reservations call 800-253-2704.

Fiesta Americana Cozumel features a three-night package, priced from \$309 per person, double occupancy and a seven-night package, priced from \$741 per person, double occupancy. Packages are valid through December 24. For reservations call toll-free 877-FIESTA-8.

Fiesta Inn Cozumel has a three-night package, priced from \$354 for one diver/one non-diver and \$455 for two divers. Seven-night packages range from \$843 for one diver/one non-diver and \$1,097 for two divers. Packages are valid through December 24 of this year. For reservations call toll-free 877-FIESTA-8.

La Ceiba Resort Hotel and Beach Club offers a three-night package starting at \$414 for one diver/one non-diver and \$514 for two divers. Seven-night packages start at \$960 for one diver/one non-diver and \$1,210 for two divers. Packages are valid through December 23. For reservations call 800-437-9609.

Paradisus Cozumel All-Inclusive Beach Resort offers a three-night package, priced at \$655 for one diver/one

non-diver and \$762 for two divers. Seven-night packages are available, starting at \$1,507 for one diver/one non-diver and \$1,776 for two divers. Packages are valid through December 23. For reservations call toll-free 888-345-5993.

Playa Azul Hotel has a four-night "Dive Azul" package, priced from \$486 for one diver/one non-diver and \$596 for two divers. Seven-night packages range from \$846 for one diver/one non-diver to \$1,056 for two divers. Packages are valid through December 15. For reservations call 011-52-987-20033.

Plaza Las Glorias has three-night dive packages that start at \$290 per person, double occupancy, and seven-night packages priced from \$746 per person, double occupancy. Prices are valid through December 18. For reservations, call 800-342-AMIGO.

Presidente Inter Continental offers a three-night minimum stay dive package for \$112 per person, per night, double occupancy. This rate is available through December 18. For reservations, call 800-327-0200.

Sol Cabanas del Caribe offers a three-night package for \$437 for one diver/one non-diver and \$544 for two divers. Seven-night packages start at \$997 for one diver/one non-diver to \$1,266 for two divers. Packages are available through December 23. For reservations call toll-free 888-345-5993.

Other Cozumel resorts currently offering special dive packages include **Allegro Resort Cozumel**, 011-52-987-2-3443; **Bahia & Colonial Hotels**, 011-52-987-4-4034; **Crown Paradise Club**, 011-52-987-2-0700; **Days Inn Villa del Rey**, 011-52-987-2-1600; **El Cozumeleno**, 011-52-987-2-0344; **Reef Club Isla Cozumel**, 011-52-987-4-3624 and **Sun Village San Miguel**, 011-52-987-2-0323.

BAY ADVENTURES ADDS VP

Miami-based travel wholesaler **Bay Adventures** has brought NAUI instructor Susie Gillespie on as its new vice president. Susie, a NAUI instructor since 1988, is the former co-owner of Undersea Adventures in Atlanta. She

leaves her position as Assistant Director of Athletics & Recreation with Emory University to join Bay Adventures, which specializes in dive and vacation travel to Cozumel and the Mexican Caribbean.

"Over the last 10 years, I've personally led over 30 groups of students and certified divers to the island, and I'm very excited about sharing the fun of visiting Cozumel with others. I'm looking forward to working with our clients from all over the world to bring them to this very special place," she said.

BAY ISLANDS

NEW ROATAN-BASED LIVE-ABOARD

Caribbean Dream, a new live-aboard vessel, began operating in the Bay Islands on June 26. Headquartered at the Parrot Tree resort, the 120-foot vessel has three decks and room for 20.

The *Caribbean Dream* features eight master staterooms with queen-size beds, private head/shower, TV/VCR, large windows, air conditioning and carpeting. Topside, there's a shaded sundeck with a hot tub, wet bar and grill. There's also an entertainment salon and nightly film and slide shows.

The dive options include up to five dives daily, nitrox, instruction and gear and camera rental.

For more information, contact *Caribbean Dream* Live-Aboard at 877-337-DIVE (toll free) or 281-337-1619; fax: 281-337-3912; e-mail: info@caribbeandream.com; Web: www.caribbeandream.com.

SPECIAL PACKAGES AT OAK BAY

Oak Bay Resort on Roatan is offering divers two special packages: A seven-night stay in a studio apartment with 10 boat dives and unlimited shore diving is \$325 per person, double or shared occupancy, through Oct. 30.

Seven nights in a beachfront apartment with eight boat dives and unlimited shore diving is \$350 per person.

For more information, call 011-504-435-2337 or e-mail scuba@laceiba.com.

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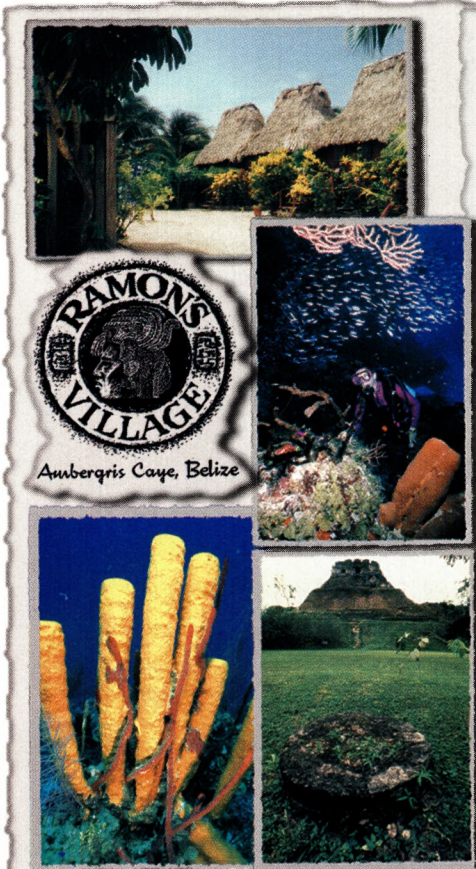
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AGGRESSOR/DRAEGER TEAM UP

The Kona Aggressor II and **Draeger** will host a Draeger RAY rebreather training week Dec. 11-18. Draeger will teach guests to dive safely with the new RAY unit. A full rebreather certification and maintenance course is included in the charter.

Draeger will supply nine units that may be dived throughout the week. A nitrox course is included for non-nitrox certified divers.

The *Kona Aggressor II* is a 10-passenger yacht that dives Hawaii's Kona coast. Seven-day charters run Saturday to Saturday with five-plus days of diving. Cost for the rebreather package is \$2,395 per person/double occupancy. For reservations, call your travel agent or Aggressor Fleet Ltd. at 800-348-2628; e-mail: info@aggressor.com; Web: www.aggressor.com.

PETER HUGHES' FALL FANTASY IN PALAU

Guests staying aboard **Peter Hughes' Sun Dancer II** in Palau will again enjoy a \$400 savings during the Fall Fantasy promotion. Reduced fares are available beginning July 25 through October 24 of this year, with prices starting at just \$1,795.

The company's in-house travel specialists also offer bulk-rate airline fares on Continental. For information and reservations, call your favorite dive travel planner or contact Peter Hughes Diving at 800-9-DANCER, e-mail: dancer@peterhughes.com, www.peterhughes.com

MICRONESIA VALUE PACKAGES

World of Diving and Adventure Vacations is offering value dive packages and a free wetsuit for every diver booking airfare and live-aboard passage to Micronesia through the following **Aggressor Fleet** and **SS Thorfinn** diving specials:

SS Thorfinn: July 1-Aug. 31 departures, \$2,945; Sept. 1-Nov. 30 departures, \$3. Includes round-trip airfare

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from the U.S. West Coast and 6 nights /5 diving days.

Palau Aggressor II: Feb. 20 - 27; March 5-12; April 2-9 departures, \$2,295 per person plus airfare for any of the above weeks.

Truk Aggressor II: Feb 27-March 5; April 9-16 departures, \$2,295 per person plus airfare for any of the above weeks.

Packages are also available in:

Truk at the Blue Lagoon Resort: \$1,914 per person/double occupancy. Package includes: round-trip airfare from the U.S. West Coast, seven nights accommodation, five days of two-tank boat diving, airport transfers and taxes.

Yap at the Pathways Hotel: \$2,174 per person/double occupancy. Package includes: round-trip airfare from the U.S. West Coast, two nights in Guam, seven nights at the Pathways Hotel, 6 days of two-tank diving, daily continental breakfast, island lunch on dive days, two island buffet dinners, tanks, weights transfers and taxes.

Palau at Sam's Dive Tours: \$1,824

per person/double occupancy; package includes round-trip airfare from the U.S. West Coast, seven nights lodging, five days two-tank boat diving, with lunch and taxes.

Palau at the Palau Pacific Resort: \$1,931, pay for five nights get the sixth free. Package includes round-trip airfare from the U.S. West Coast, six nights lodging, four days of two-tank boat diving with Splash Divers, transfers and taxes
Call 800-GO-DIVING.

SPECIAL PRICING ON FIJI AND TAHITI PACKAGES

Special summer and fall travel packages are now available from **World of Diving and Adventure Vacations.**

Offered is a special seven-night package at the **Matangi Island Resort** in Fiji at a cost of \$2,399 per person/double occupancy. This price includes round trip airfare from Los Angeles, inter-island air, accommodations, all meals, five days of two-tank boat diving, transfers and taxes.

Also available is a seven-night stay

in a garden bungalow on Moorea, Tahiti for a price of \$1,640 per person/double occupancy. This price includes round-trip airfare from Los Angeles; inter-island air; 10 boat dives, including one night dive, one stingray dive and two shark dives; all transfers and hotel taxes.

For more information, call 800-GO-DIVING.

MALDIVES

GUIDE TO MALDIVES

In an interview with Tim Godfrey, author of *Dive Maldives, A Guide to the Maldives Archipelago*, the author was asked about his favorite Maldives dive sites.

He responded: "This is a difficult question because there are so many, each offering something different. I personally like any of the thilas or outside corners of the kandus at first light, where the movement of water and dim light attracts a great deal of activity and confusion. There are always surprises at these times, often unexpected ones, such as hammerhead sharks."

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DEL MAR VACATIONS

One Island One Stop

I hate buying cars. Know what I mean? What color? Do you want the Royal XYZ edition or would you prefer the one without brakes? Leather interior or yak's hair? No, you can't get that with that model, but we can special-order it. It'll only take three years.

For me, the ideal way to buy a car (and I actually just did something very similar to this) would be to walk in, not test-drive a thing and say, "I want that one. When can I pick it up? And let's please keep the conversation to a minimum."

Now, when it comes to vacations, you can imagine that I'm not much for doing a lot of legwork to plan them. I decide where I want to go — so get me there, make me comfortable, and leave me alone.

If this form of one-stop dive-vacation shopping appeals to you, you might want to opt for Cozumel for your next dive trip. Aside from the obvious attraction of diving this wonderful island, it's also home to Del Mar Vacations, your no-sweat, one-stop vacation "store."

At Del Mar Vacations (DMV), one phone call does it all. Call DMV and they can take care of everything: discount airfares, hotel reservations, diving, car rentals and just about any other water-

sport. It's the way to vacation for people who want to start vacationing when they start planning the trip.

You can stay at La Ceiba, Coz's best-known dive-oriented hotel, where the water is so close that you can almost step out your door and be underwater. La Ceiba recently renovated its rooms and lobby, and the hotel also has restaurants, two pools and a hot-tub spa.

Then there's the Casa Del Mar (CDM), Cozumel's original dive lodge. If you want to save even more money, you'll stay here, just a few steps inland from the water. CDM features value accommodations — good value because all the rooms feature cable television, air conditioning and a phone. There's also a restaurant and a pool, and duplex and suite accommodations are available.

Want to have wheels while you're on-island? (You must do a trip around the island at least once while you're on Cozumel.) DMV can fix you up with the latest in four-by-fours, air-conditioned cars and even the dreaded I'm-on-vacation-I-gotta-rent-a-Moped two-wheelers.

As for the diving, well, it rarely gets better than Cozumel. This is Drift Diving Central and you'll soar along beau-

tiful coral canyons and mountains with barely a ripple of your fins. The water is beautifully clear, the coral healthy, and the diving just incredibly simple.

And who better to dive with than Del Mar Aquatics, the best-known name in Cozumel? Fast boats with local dive masters and crews who really know the waters, a full-service dive shop across from CDM and a beautiful white-sand, park-like area where you can rest up from a "strenuous" day of drift diving.

If you are heading for Cozumel and are craving a dose of Del Mar treatment, call or play in their Web site to get the latest update on special offers and discounts. For a limited time, divers get a free mesh dive backpack (a \$50 value) as part of their vacation package deal. Just add a bathing suit and you're good to go — they have a complete line of rental gear if you need it.

See? One phone call. No sweat, no hassle, no decisions — just a dive vacation. The way it's meant to be. — George Jensen

AT A GLANCE

DEL MAR VACATIONS

888-69-CEIBA or 281-257-1771; Fax: 281-257-1783;

e-mail: info@godelmar.com; Web: www.godelmar.com.

PARADISUS COZUMEL

Cozumel, Mexico



Want a Caribbean vacation at a resort that combines the luxury of a cruise with the versatility of being on land? The Paradisus Cozumel (formerly Melia Mayan Paradisus), located on the northwest side of the island of Cozumel, is the ideal spot to choose whatever activity (or inactivity) you have in mind at an affordable price.

There are 150 deluxe air-conditioned units at the five-star resort, each with a terrace or balcony, satellite TV and phone. The accommodations are just a few minutes walk to the long stretch of glistening white beach, the hotel facilities, restaurants and bars.

At Paradisus, you can swim in one of two pools, snorkel in the ocean, take an introductory lesson in scuba diving, go windsurfing, kayaking or sail a sunfish. There are two courts for tennis buffs, step and water aerobics classes, daily bicycle and horseback riding tours, and the full-sized gym and steam bath is open until 9 p.m. You can end your busy schedule with a nightly show, disco or karaoke at the Club Fantasia.

No vacation is complete without excellent meals and snack, and Paradisus provides fine dining from about 6 a.m. until 11 p.m. A delicious variety of dishes are served buffet style for breakfast, lunch and dinner at La Isla. Giant, gaily colored papier mache fish and parrots float suspended from the building's vaulted, thatched roof. The room is surrounded on three sides with floor-to-ceiling

windows and by a portico set with additional table for those who want to take full advantage of the ocean or pool-side breezes.

In case sun, air and exercise (or an iron will at breakfast) has rendered you weak and wobbly, La Iguana is open from 11 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. This rustic snack bar is on the beach and serves light meals and "in-betweens."

Tropical flowers line the path, which leads to a bridge across a lagoon and into Café Paraiso, the resort's gourmet restaurant. The room's singular illumination and focal point is a six-foot, freshwater tank with exotic Yucatan fish gliding through a miniature Mayan ruin. The warm glow of candles enhances elegant table settings. Dining is table d'hôte—usually a choice of appetizers, soups or salads, entrees and desserts—all exquisitely prepared and served. Reservations are required and a dress code is suggested.

The service is impeccable at Paradisus Cozumel, and the bilingual staff is ever-attentive. They're helpful in arranging tours and giving information about this friendly island. The town of San Miguel is only 3.6 miles away and is easily and reasonably accessible by taxi. In addition to the multitude of shops and restaurants, the Museum of Cozumel is definitely worth a visit to learn about its reefs, its Mayan history and the island's development. If you rent a car or scooter and tour the island on your own, stop at San Gervasio, the most

notable Mayan ruin. And don't worry about staying out late. The town is safe and nightlife continues until about 3 a.m.

Even though there are sufficient programs at Paradisus Cozumel to keep both children and adults content, many guests come to dive Cozumel's southwestern section—one of the great barrier reefs of the world. The staff is happy to arrange dive trips with an international team of American, European, and Mexican dive operators dedicated to providing First Class service. Small groups under careful supervision are taken to the famous Planacar Reef and to Santa Rosa wall. Certification courses are offered as well.

Whether traveling with your family on a holiday, in a group, at a convention or on a honeymoon, young, or young at heart, the Paradisus Cozumel is the perfect place to rev up or wind down in luxury. It's well named—Paradise—in Cozumel.



AT A GLANCE

PARADISUS COZUMEL

For information, call 888-341-5993, email: paradisus@cozumel.com.mx; www.iminet.com/mexico/coz203.html

MORE MALDIVES

24-HOUR VIDEO A FIRST

The world's first digital-TV broadcast documentary and high-quality pictorial almanac to be broadcast over a 24-hour period - **24 Hours Beneath the Rainbow Sea** - was taped in April in the Maldives. The documentary is being broadcasted live on the Internet at www.24hoursdive.com.
24 Hours Beneath the Rainbow Sea

was launched in November 1998, with the cooperation of Michael Aw, author and photographer of OceanNEnvironment Ltd. of Australia and the Maldives Tourism Promotion Board. The Minister of Tourism, Hassan Sobir, inaugurated the event at noon April 10 by initiating the first dive. Forty-nine other professionals dived continuously during a period of 24 hours, recording a day in the life at Maayaa Thila Reef off Ari Atoll in the

Maldives. This professional team consisted of underwater photographers and film crew, supported by scientists and backed by state-of-the-art dive technology.

The main aim of this event was to create awareness about the richness of the Maldivian reefs.

MALDIVES WINS BEACH AWARD

The Maldives was chosen to receive the **Golden Globo Award** as the destination

MALDIVES

Ari Beach Resort

Situated by an idyllic lagoon, Ari Beach Resort has retained the simple and natural atmosphere of these beautiful islands...at the same time providing modern comforts and facilities, international and local cuisine, the widest selection of water-sports available, 2 restaurants & 3 well stocked bars. Superb diving is nearby, with more than 25 dream dive sites. A highly professional team ensures the very best underwater experience. We offer 121 beachfront bungalows with A/C, IDD telephone and private terraces.



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with the most beautiful beaches in a travel survey conducted among the readers of Germany's Globo Magazine. The award was presented to the Maldives in March during the ITB Fair in Berlin.

The Maldives was chosen as the destination with the most beautiful beaches by 7.7 percent of the readers of Globo magazine. Florida (7.3 percent), Hawaii (6.6 percent), North Thailand (6 percent) and Seychelles

(5.7 percent) followed the Maldives.

Globo magazine is a travel magazine with circulation in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

GREAT DEALS ON PRIVATE ISLE

Soneva Fushi, the remote resort on Kunfunadhoo Island situated in the North Baa Atoll, is offering divers a seven-night special through Dec. 19. For \$2,175 per person, the package includes round-trip air from Male to

the resort, seven nights accommodation (based on twin share), meals, six days unlimited diving (including boat trips), tanks, weights, transfers and taxes.

Kunfunadhoo is accessible by a 35-minute flight or a three-hour speedboat trip from Male. Villas are scattered along the beach.

Contact Tropical Adventures, 800-247-3483; Web: www.divetropical.com

Gomafulhu

For sailing and diving enthusiasts who want a combination of relaxation and something more, this 23-meter diving and sailing yacht is equipped with six air-conditioned double cabins, bath / shower with hot and cold water, a large deck and an air-conditioned main cabin equipped with bar, library, TV and stereo. With a maximum capacity for 12, Gomafulhu offers something more than the usual. There are 3-4 dive packages providing an excellent base on which to explore the Maldives Islands and the beauty of the underwater world beneath.

For information contact Crown Tours Maldives

Phone: 011-960-322432

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E-Mail: ctours@dhivehinet.net.mv

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Lohifushi

Services and Facilities: 130 bungalows including suites; deluxe, superior and standard accommodation. All are constructed as individual units hidden away below the natural vegetation. The luxurious resort with a total of 254 beds offers 4-5 star services as the only hotel on the island providing several restaurants, bars, sports, recreation and entertainment facilities. Located 12 miles north of Malé International Airport, about 25 minutes by sea.

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market@euro-divers.com

www.euro-divers.com



MANTHIRI LIVE-ABOARD

Maldives



The Maldives are world-renowned for the quality and diversity of diving found in the clear tropical waters of these islands. The spectacular underwater terrain includes valleys of luscious soft corals and gardens of delicate hard corals populated by a rich healthy population of reef-dwelling wildlife. Nearby, precipitous walls, pinnacles and deep oceanic channels promise glimpses of visiting pelagic species including mantas, sharks, whales and tuna.

For visiting divers, picking a single location within the 26 atolls and 1,200 islands that make up the Maldives can be a daunting task. Many have found that the best way to experience the full diversity of this magnificent realm is from a live-aboard dive boat.

The queen of Maldivian live-aboards is the Manthiri, a custom-built, thoroughly modern vessel designed to pamper a limited number of diving guests. This fully air-conditioned 85-foot vessel carries 12 guests in six private cabins, along with a crew of 11. In addition to a sun deck, main salon and bar, the public areas of the boat include a camera salon, which is equipped with a light table, camera workspace, and an E-6 film-processing studio.

Two full-time chefs prepare a range of continental and local dishes and snacks,

with libations available at the communal bar on the boat's top deck and en suite mini-bars located in each cabin. Redundant water makers ensure an unlimited supply of fresh water for showers and camera rinses, and both 110-volt and 220-volt power is available throughout the vessel. All diving takes place from an accompanying 42-foot dive boat that is fitted with twin compressors and all necessary safety equipment. This arrangement not only provides divers the luxury of leaving gear to the care of the dive boat crew, but also allows the smaller vessel to visit a wider range of sites.

The typical dive schedule involves three daytime dives and a night dive. Divers wishing to extend bottom time can select large 94-cubic-foot tanks. Dives are typically 50 to 70 minutes in duration, providing the opportunity to rack up an impressive amount of safe bottom time during the course of a voyage. Oxygen and first aid are carried aboard both vessels, and if needed, hyperbaric facilities are available on Bandos Island.

Manthiri offers 7- to 14-day itineraries that not only allow for diving, but also leave time for visits to native fishing villages, local resort islands and traditional Maldivian barbecue dinners prepared on the shores of a tropical island.

Each dive tour begins in Male, the capital of the Maldives, and covers approximately 200 to 250 miles through a number of atolls. All cruising is done during daylight hours, usually passing through sheltered waters within sight of postcard-perfect islands covered by rich green vegetation and ringed by white-sand beaches and turquoise lagoons. Normally, the vessel is anchored in calm water by sunset, often near an uninhabited island or a deserted sandbar.

Air and water temperatures in the Maldives vary slightly throughout the year, typically holding in the low to mid-80s. December to April are considered prime diving seasons, while currents - and the chances of big animal sightings - peak in January to March. Divers visiting from August to November can also expect

excellent water conditions, along with an increased chance of seeing manta rays.

Whatever season you select for a Maldivian diving adventure aboard the Manthiri, you can expect to enjoy one of the most memorable, exciting underwater and topside experiences of your life.



AT A GLANCE

MANTHIRI

For more information on the Manthiri and on other exciting dive destinations around the world, contact Tropical Adventures, Call 800-247-3483, fax 206-441-5431, E-mail dive@divetropical.com, or browse www.divetropical.com.

TURNEFFE ISLAND LODGE

Belize



With beautiful white-sand beaches and a background sound of palm trees gently rustling in steady onshore breezes, it's easy to dispel any thoughts of civilization, worries, stress or care. But then, that's what you've been looking for, and it looks like that's what you've found — your own little bit of heaven on earth, the Turneffe Island Lodge.

Situated 30 miles off the coast of Belize on the southernmost tip of the Turneffe Islands in the gloriously deserted Turneffe Atoll, this 12-acre private island is your getaway from the hustle and bustle of the end of the century. And that's just above water.

Picture this: Twelve rooms, each with its own queen and twin beds, local mahogany furniture, private bath and a screened-in porch facing the bluest Caribbean you've ever seen — the perfect spot to sit back, put your heels up and enjoy after-dive libations as you drink in the quiet and scenery that surrounds you. Some of the rooms offer air conditioning as an extra, but it's often moot. That

fresh tropical breeze makes life at the Turneffe Island Lodge idyllic regardless.

Since the Turneffe Island Lodge is an all-inclusive resort, your meals are taken care of, and you can relax with the limited number of other guests in the on-site lounge and swap stories of the wonders you've seen and those yet to come. The service and ambience is extraordinary, and the lodge's philosophy mandates always exceeding what you expect in both comfort and quality.

But you came here to dive, and no better choice could you have made. With a dedicated PADI full-service shop on the premises, complete with PADI-certified instructors and guides, you're but a 10-minute boat ride from some of the best diving in the Caribbean. So close, in fact, that you'll spend surface intervals back at the lodge rather than bouncing around the sea. Dive packages will sate even the most gung-ho dive-dive-dive enthusiast with 17 single-tank dives for the Saturday-to-Saturday visiting guest. And these include dives at the famed Blue Hole as well as at Long Caye Wall and Half Moon Wall, among

some 70 other world-class sites. Dive packages range from \$1,249 to \$1,350.

Don't miss your shot at diving in paradise. Check out Turneffe Island Lodge for your next dive vacation.



TURNEFFE LODGE AT A GLANCE

For reservations and information contact Ultimate Dive Travel, 800-737-3483; fax: 630-616-0727; e-mail: udive@ultimatedivetravel.com; Web: www.ultimatedive-travel.com.

LITTLE CAYMAN BEACH RESORT

Quality Relaxation



How often have you heard this phrase about any dive area: "You should have seen it back in the old days?" This phrase, in all its variations, applies to just about any outdoor sport, and in many cases, the truth be known, things were better back in the old days.

Well if you'd like a taste of what the grand lady of Caribbean diving—the Cayman Islands—was like "back in the old days," there's no better way to experience it than by diving Little Cayman Island from the Little Cayman Beach Resort.

The Little Cayman Beach Resort offers the unique combination of uncrowded, hassle-free, old-time Cayman diving combined with all the modern amenities that make diving safe and fun and shore-side living a modern-day pleasure.

Little Cayman Beach Resort offers 28 pool-view rooms and 12 luxury oceanfront rooms. All rooms feature air conditioning, ceiling fans, television, private bath and your own balcony or patio providing beautiful vistas of this 1-by-10-mile island, the smallest of the Caymans. The oceanfront



digs also feature microwaves, refrigerators and coffee makers. The 1999 topside version of how the Caymans used to be also features gourmet food, fresh seafood and island favorites (and quite a well-stocked wine list) in the air-conditioned Bird of Paradise restaurant. Or, you can choose to take your libations at the Beach Nuts Bar (and add your name to the ceiling collage of those who've been there before you; they'll provide the paint and brushes).

If you really must stay in touch with the outside world, there are complete phone and fax facilities. The resort also offers laundry service, an ice machine and

sign-out bicycles (for cruising the island). The resort's rooms and restaurant are also all smoke-free.

For after-dive activities, there's a freshwater pool, lighted tennis court, a health and beauty salon (complete with licensed masseuse and Jacuzzi), a complete fitness center and a game room and library. Forgot something? Simple. Check out the resort's Mermaid's Boutique.

But it's the diving at Bloody Bay Wall and Jackson Bight you really came for (and, yes, you'll also get your shot at Cayman Brac's famed MV *Captain Keith Tibbetts*, the former Russian destroyer), right? One of the top-rated dive operations in the world, Reef Divers, just happens to be based out of the Little Cayman Beach Resort as well.

With three 42-foot Newton custom dive boats that depart for a two-tank dive at 8:30 a.m. and a one-tanker at 2 p.m., you'll be diving from some of the best boats in the dive industry. Nitrox diving is available (as are Nitrox courses and computers) and nearly every manner of PADI dive specialty course is also available. For photographers (or those itching to become underwater photographers), there's the Reef Photo & Video center, the oldest full-service professional underwater center in the Sister Islands. Film processing, camera rentals, video rentals and equipment repairs, plus regular coaching or full-on certification courses in photography, are all offered.

For a taste of the Cayman Islands like they used to be, and a chance to experience some of the most picturesque and beautiful dive sites in the world, the choice is simple: Little Cayman Beach Resort, where quality relaxation, professional diving and the beauty of island living never go out of style.

AT A GLANCE

FANTASY ISLAND RESORT

For reservations and information: 800-594-6703; 727-323-8727; fax: 727-323-8827; e-mail: bestdiving@aol.com; Web: www.bralittle.com.

BON BINI DIVERS

Bonaire



Bon Bini Divers welcomes you to Bonaire. That sentiment is even part of the name. (Bon bini in the Papiamentu language means welcome.)

Bonaire's smallest full-service dive facility, Bon Bini Divers offers all the amenities of large dive facilities without the crowds. Indeed, Bon Bini Divers has earned its reputation primarily by word-of-mouth recommendations from happy customers who return time after time to experience Bonaire's fabulous diving without crowds or hassles.

A PADI five-star Gold Palm Resort and full SSI dealer, Bon Bini Divers offers a full line of instructional courses from the beginner's level all the way through instructor. Offering the widest variety of specialty courses available on Bonaire, you can pick and choose from more than 20 specialties, many of which are available only at Bon Bini Divers.

While many dive facilities have large boats with the capacity to carry 25 divers, Bon Bini Divers chooses to maintain its small and intimate ambience with boats that only carry up to 12 divers. Of

course, diving at the nearby lush sites of Bonaire is available 24 hours around the clock.

In 1998, Bon Bini Divers premiered its on-island reservation service to assist diving guests with any other services they desired. This program has proved to be extremely popular as many visitors to Bonaire are taking advantage of the staff's local knowledge and recommendations for services such as accommodations, vehicle rentals or sightseeing. Bon Bini Divers can now offer complete packages for every budget. In fact, instead of offering a set package, Bon Bini Divers will listen to your preferences and budgets and tailor a package just to your needs.

This year, Bon Bini Divers proudly announces the opening of its second location on Bonaire. Very soon, Bon Bini Divers will be offering its usual quality services at the newly opened Eden Beach Resort. Now Bon Bini Divers guests can relax on a beautiful, sandy beach while watching for Bonaire's infamous Green Flash.

Of course, accommodations can still be arranged at Bon Bini Divers' first location at the Lions Dive Resort, as well as at private villas, apartments and other resorts.

So if you value personalized service truly served up with a smile, contact Bon Bini Divers Bonaire to plan the perfect dive getaway. Packages through December 15 begin at \$499 per person (accommodations and diving, quad occupancy).



AT A GLANCE

BON BINI DIVERS

For reservations or information, contact Bon Bini Divers Bonaire, N.V., Kaya Gobernador N. Debrat #90, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles; phone: 599-75425; fax: 599-74425; e-mail: info@bonbinidivers.com; Web: www.bonbinidivers.com.

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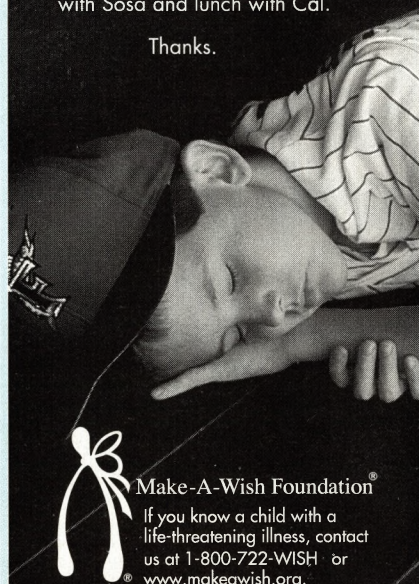
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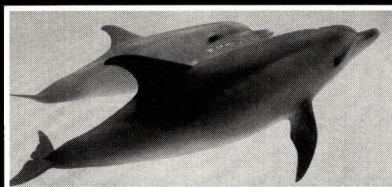
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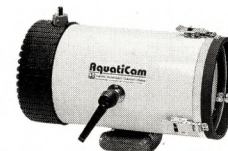
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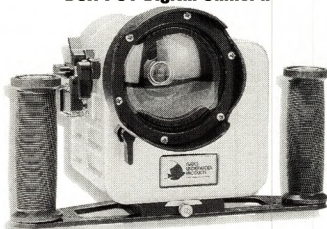


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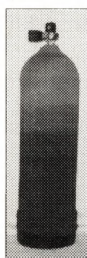
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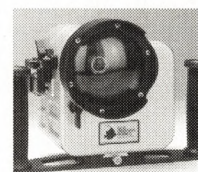
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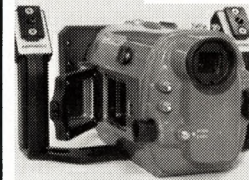


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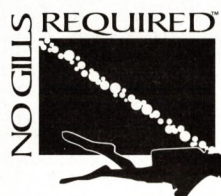
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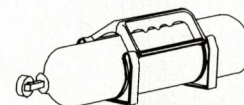
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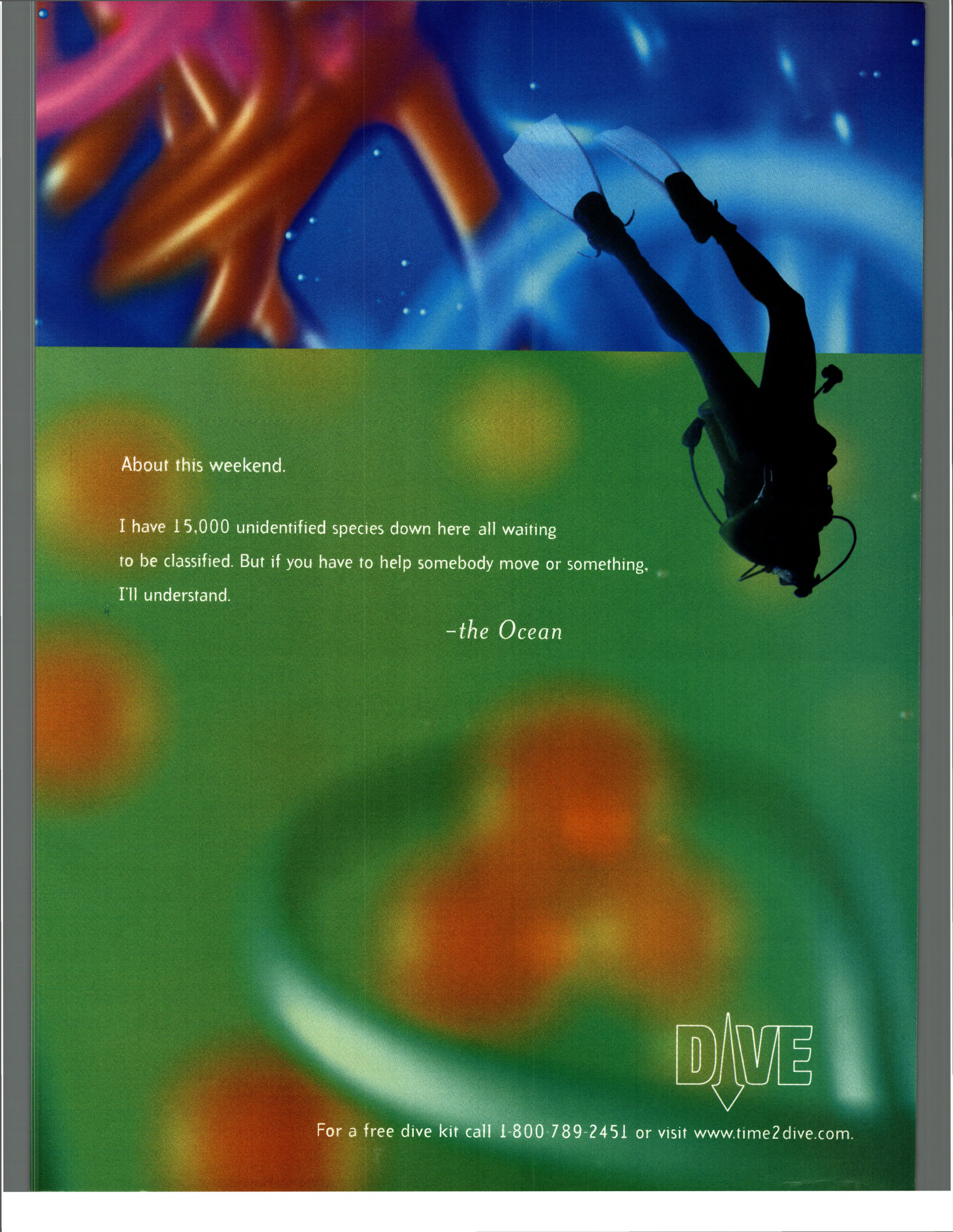
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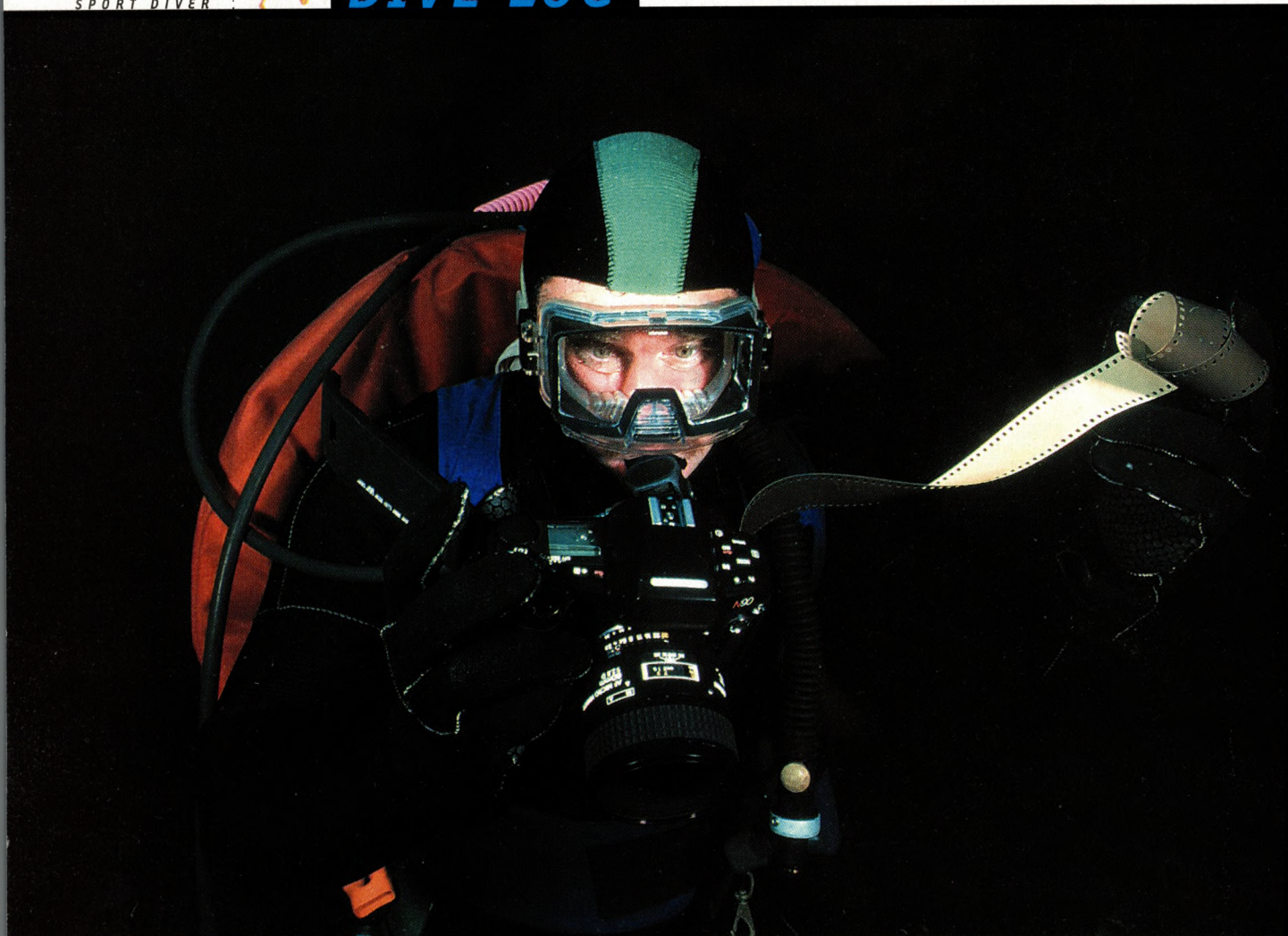
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-the Ocean

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ERIC HANAUER

DON'T TRY THIS WITH YOUR CAMERA

Professional underwater shooters will tell you there are only two kinds of cameras: those that have flooded and those about to. For many years, I defied the odds. There was the occasional leak of course, but never the catastrophe of a total flood. Until now. And like most of these debacles, the cause was pilot error. What do you do with a flooded camera? The only decent thing to do was give it a burial at sea. My buddy, Joe Belanger, took the camera down without its drysuit for a final assignment - changing film underwater. When finished, we left it on a reef at 20 feet. Too bad we couldn't be there the next day when some shocked diver found it.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Eric Hanauer

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Catalina Island, CA

DEPTH

30 feet

EQUIPMENT

Nikon N90S, 24-mm

lens, pair of Ikelite

200s, Fujichrome

Astia 100

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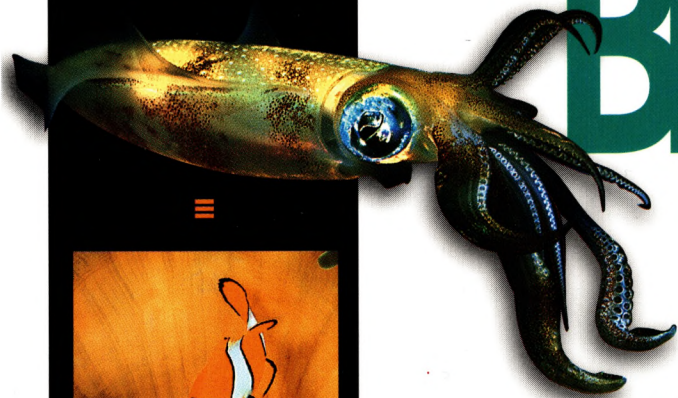


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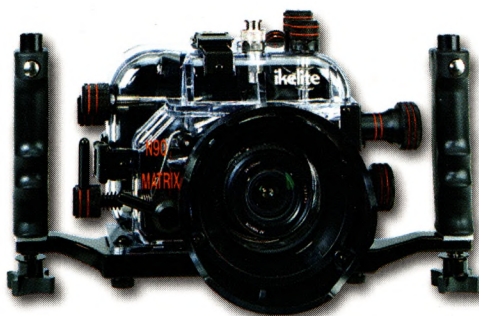
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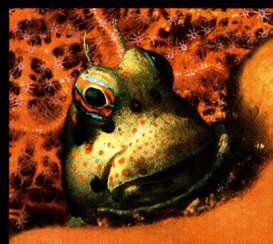
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